UNF*CK YOUR BOUNDARIES WORKBOOK

BUILD BETTER RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH CONSENT, COMMUNICATION, AND EXPRESSING YOUR NEEDS

FAITH G. HARPER

PhD, LPC-S, ACS, ACN

This person gives me a bad feeling...
This person gives me a warm feeling...
SECURE
ANXIOUS
AVOIDANT
RING
RING
RING
HONK

Unfuck Your Boundaries Workbook

BUILD BETTER RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH CONSENT, COMMUNICATION, AND EXPRESSING YOUR NEEDS

Faith G. Harper,
PhD, LPC-S, ACS, ACN

Microcosm Publishing
Portland, OR

UNFUCK YOUR BOUNDARIES WORKBOOK

Build Better Relationships through Consent, Communication, and Expressing Your Needs

Part of the 5 Minute Therapy Series

© Dr. Faith Harper, 2020
This edition © Microcosm Publishing, 2020

First edition, first published March 10, 2020

ISBN 978-1-62106-1762
This is Microcosm #540
Cover and design by Joe Biel
Illustrations by Trista Vercher
Edited by Elly Blue

For a catalog, write or visit:
Microcosm Publishing
2752 N Williams Ave.
Portland, OR 97227
503-799-2698
www.microcosmpublishing.com

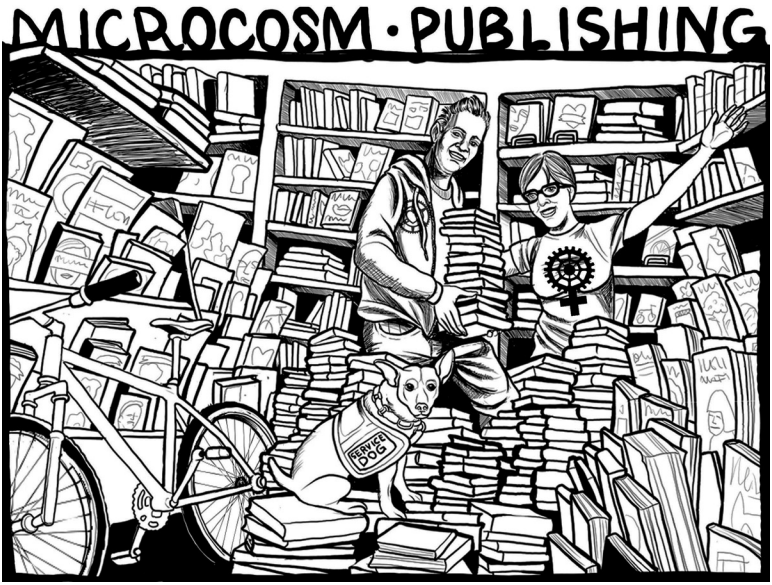
These worksheets can be used on their own, or as a companion to ***Unfuck Your Boundaries: Using Science For Better Relationships, Sex, and Dating*** by Dr. Faith G. Harper.

These worksheets are free to reproduce but no more than two can be reproduced in a publication without expressed permission from the publisher.

To join the ranks of high-class stores that feature Microcosm titles, talk to your rep: In the U.S. **Como** (Atlantic), **Fujii** (Midwest), **Book Travelers West** (Pacific), **Turnaround** in Europe, **Manda/UTP** in Canada, **New South** in Australia, and **GPS** in Asia, India, Africa, and South America.

If you bought this on Amazon, I'm so sorry because you could have gotten it cheaper and supported a small, independent publisher at **Microcosm.Pub**

Global labor conditions are bad, and our roots in industrial Cleveland in the 70s and 80s made us appreciate the need to treat workers right. Therefore, our books are MADE IN THE USA and printed on post-consumer paper.



Microcosm Publishing is Portland's most diversified publishing house and distributor with a focus on the colorful, authentic, and empowering. Our books and zines have put your power in your hands since 1996, equipping readers to make positive changes in their lives and in the world around them. Microcosm emphasizes skill-building, showing hidden histories, and fostering creativity through challenging conventional publishing wisdom with books and bookettes about DIY skills, food, bicycling, gender, self-care, and social justice. What was once a distro and record label was started by Joe Biel in his bedroom and has become among the oldest independent publishing houses in Portland, OR. We are a politically moderate, centrist publisher in a world that has inched to the right for the past 80 years.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 6
PART 1: Get to Know Your Boundaries 10
Personal Boundaries History 12
Boundary Styles 14
Types of Boundaries 16
Gut Check Your Boundaries 20
How Flexible Are Your Boundaries 24
How Others Respect Your Boundaries 25
How Your Respect Others' Boundaries 26
Recognizing Boundary Violations 27
Values Clarification 32
Map Your Values 36
My Authentic Self 37
Honoring Your Values through Your Boundaries 38
Your Ideal Funeral 39
An Exercise in Voice 40
Personal Bill of Rights 42
It's Not My Job 43
Red Flags / Green Flags 44
Attachment Styles Map 45
Learning Your Body's Responses 50
PART 2: Grounding Exercises 52
Grounding Statement 54
Stop! Grounding Time: 5...4...3...2...1 55
A Loving Kindness Boundary Meditation 56

Measuring Your Breath by Your Footsteps 57
Appreciative Inquiry 58
PART 3: Communicate Your Boundaries 60
Communicating with "I Statements" 62
What's Your Communication Style? 64
Map Your Communication Style 66
BIFF Statements 68
PART 4: Respecting Other's Boundaries 72
Boundary Respect Self-Assessment 74
Self-Accountability 75
Handling No 84
Apology Template 86
PART 5: Exercises for Groups 90
Group Rules for Community Conversatiosns 92
Talking Circles 94
Personal Space Exercise 96
STFU 97
The Consent Commandments 98
Sample Consent Policy for Groups 102
Dealing With Incidents 104
Sample Incident Policy 106
PART 6: Identifying Abuse 108
Coercive Control Checklist 110
Red Flags Checklist 112
Checklist of Coercive Control Strategies 114
Resources 116
About the Author 126

INTRODUCTION

Boundaries and consent.

Shit. OK.

This isn't easy stuff to work through, if we are doing it right. (And anyone who tells you this is all easy can fuck the fuck off. It isn't. You aren't a failure if you have struggled with boundaries. Welcome to the club I like to call "being human."

The term *boundary* really just refers to the line (literal or metaphorical) that marks the limits of a particular area. Boundaries are the edge territory of what belongs to us and what belongs to someone else. Our boundaries are the essential building blocks of our relationships. They are how we operate in the world. They are our rules of engagement. Our everyday expressions of *consent*. The space in which we navigate relationships and community. Really, that's it in a nutshell. And yes. That *is* a simple description. But simple doesn't mean easy.

There are tons of things that get in the way of us having a healthy respect for our own and each others' boundaries. There's trauma. And there's how we were raised (even if not traumatic per se, how we bond with our early caregivers can affect other relationships throughout our lives). And all the toxic, horrible things that are happening in the world end up influencing

how boundaries are created and respected or disregarded and demolished. So we need to reflect, practice, and communicate a lot so we can get better at them.

And since I can't be everyone's individual therapist, I created this workbook. We made it to go with my book *Unfuck Your Boundaries*.

It contains exercises that go with a bunch of the chapters in that book, plus a bunch more exercises—especially stuff about groups and consent—that don't appear in the book. It's designed to work just fine on it's own. I mean I'm totally into the accompanying boundaries book and I think you might dig it, too But you don't need to buy it and read it to use the workbook. Because sneaking unanticipated expenses into your budget is a dick move. And, dare I say it, a boundary violation?

So what do we got going on? I'm so glad I decided you asked me that question, dear reader!

Part One is all about that super important relationship between you and yourself. Getting you superclear on knowing yourself and your boundaries. And your needs. And your values. How you treat others and how you want them to treat you. It has a lot of exercises for reflecting about your needs, your values, how the people around you treat you and how you treat them. Actually knowing what we want and being able to think this stuff through is the most important part. Because when it comes down to it, the only person you have control over is your own-damn-self.

Speaking of your own-damn-self, you can do all these exercises on your own. Or you can do them with an accountability buddy, or to share with your therapist, or in a group setting. I would suggest completing them independently before sharing. There is nothing wrong with reflective feedback, or hearing cool ideas from others and adding to your own work. But paying attention to what comes up for you initially is super-important.

Part Two is all grounding exercises. Grounding exercises are just about managing our own body's reactions and staying in the

present moment. Which is helpful because, no lie, this shit is hard. It is also super important to not trudge through all by yourself if you really need support. Ask for it! A good friend, a therapist...someone you can check in with and process with if you get super activated. Maybe (but which I mean "obviously") I'm biased but I think therapy is the bomb.

Part Three is all about communication. I mean, knowing your boundaries super well isn't a whole lot of use if you can't communicate them and negotiate around them with others. This gives you a chance to practice and work out some of the communication strategies I discuss in the boundaries book so you are are primed to do so in the real world, with actual other people.

Part Four is about respecting others' boundaries. We've all fucked that up at some point, because we're people. And people tend to be awfully fallible and imperfect. But we can absolutely do better. Or at least make new and different and more interesting mistakes instead of the same ones we've made in the past, right?

Part Five is all about groups. When I started teaching workshops on boundaries and consent it was really difficult to find good resources for group discussions and group activities, so I'm including the ones I've used over the years that have been the most helpful. Whether you are doing a group specifically around boundaries and consent or you just want to include this as a topic within a group that you are already a part of (your therapy group, recovery group, bible study group, or anarchist infoshop), there are lots of resources here to get you started. It also has a lot of information and worksheets for establishing boundaries and consent within group spaces in general, and for dealing with incidents where someone in the group has violated someone else's boundaries or the group's agreements. So

whether you belong to a BDSM spank club, an avant-garde theatre group, or your local kombucha co-op (is that a thing?) there are tools in here that can help your group function as well as possible.

Part Six is about the extreme end of boundary violations—coercive control. We have to talk about it because it's the most common form of abuse in our society, and almost always legal. Oftentimes, people don't even realize that this is a form of abuse that they have been enduring. So we've included checklists to determine if someone's behavior towards you goes beyond casual thoughtlessness and into the territory of abuse. There's also information about staying safe, including communication tactics, consent information, and a big list of resources and hotlines.

So that's a lot of workbook, isn't it? You can't say I don't try to cram in as many tools as possible (although you can continue to say I use the work "fuck" far too often). There should be plenty of useful ideas in here...so settle down with a fresh mug of whatever-you-drink and get crackin'!

Dr. Faith

GET TO KNOW YOUR OWN BOUNDARIES

The term boundary really just refers to the line (literal or metaphorical) that marks the limits of a particular area. Boundaries are the edge territory of what belongs to us and what belongs to someone else.

Boundaries within any relationship, intimate or otherwise, can take many forms. They range from sexual issues ("*No butt stuff, stop pressuring me!*") to privacy issues ("*Stay out of my journal, FFS!*") to just everyday interactions ("*Please don't come by my desk and chat with me today, I'm behind on that project and I'm terrible at multitasking*" or *"I need twenty minutes to decompress when I get home from work"*).

Boundaries aren't just the hard nos, they are also the maybes and the yesses-with-limits. Like, *"Please knock before coming into my room,"* or *"I'm not sure if I want to attend that event, let me see if this pain flare dissipates by Friday."*

Additionally, boundaries change over time, across situations, and within different relationships. There isn't a specific trig formula you can apply in all situations that makes this easy. And any guru-type person who says otherwise is 103% full of shit. If it were all so super-simple, we wouldn't be having these conversations. I would be writing books about my cats or something. Definitely not trying to corral everything I have learned and shared about boundaries throughout my years of clinical practice into something actually usable.

Personal Boundaries History

We develop our sense of our own boundaries and our habits of interacting with other people's boundaries in our childhood, and they evolve throughout our entire lives. In this workbook, we're going to look hard at what our boundaries now are like and how we can do them even better. Because the messages have you internalized about your right to healthy boundaries and the ownership of your individual needs have gone on to affect *everything* in your life.

To start, it's helpful to reflect on our earlier history with boundaries and find the messages that shape us that we may not remember.

Not all of our messages about boundaries and consent we taught to us through abuse, neglect and trauma. Even parents and caretakers that are very well meaning, sometimes reinforce the idea that our boundaries don't matter in the name of cultural expectations of being nice and polite.

Understanding how these experiences have shaped us not only helps us develop a better relationship with our boundaries in the present, it helps us model better interactions for those around us.

How were terms like boundaries and consent explained to you growing up?

How were they modeled by others?

What messages did you receive about them?

What was expected of you?

How did these expectations impact you?

How do these expectations continue to impact you?

Boundary Styles

Boundaries can be rigid, permeable, or flexible.

While some people have set up camp in one of these categories, most of us will operate on a continuum of these in different situations.

Rigid Boundaries are boundaries that nothing gets through, ever, and there is zero space for negotiation. Some boundaries should be rigid AF. I mean, my boundaries around not having people punch me in the face or empty my bank account are rigid because they should be. But not all boundaries need to be that hardcore.

Permeable Boundaries are ones that everything gets through if it wants to. These boundaries are defined for you. Attacks come from the outside, and you don't know how to hold your ground. Generally speaking, permeable boundaries is just code for "letting people walk all over you." But sometimes, some boundaries should be permeable, just like sometimes, some boundaries should be rigid.

Flexible Boundaries are the baby-bear middle ground that we should operate from for most of our boundary situations. Flexible boundaries are the ones that come from listening to our internal voice that wants to protect us and wants us to experience growth. That's the voice that makes continuous calibrations about our boundaries, knowing that when we are willing to compromise in certain areas it may lead to the betterment of the relationship and emotional growth for yourself.

Generally speaking, are the majority of your boundaries rigid, flexible, or permeable?

Which of your boundaries are rigid right now? Are there any that need to be challenged in that regard? Are there any that need to be more rigid?

Which of your boundaries are permeable right now? Are there any that need to be challenged and strengthened into being flexible or even rigid? Do you have any boundaries that should remain permeable? If so, how does that permeability support, sustain, or serve you at this point in your life?

What would your ideal boundary balance look like? How close to this ideal are you right now?

What is something that is actively in your control that you can work on to move in the direction of your ideal?

Types of Boundaries

It can be helpful to think of boundaries as having seven main categories:

Physical Boundaries: These are the boundaries that deal with the pragmatics of touch (when, where, how, who, etc.)—both of others touching you and you touching others.

Property Boundaries: These are the boundaries that deal with the things we own or lay claim to. Our homes, bikes, favorite t-shirts. Of course, our primal little brains can get us into trouble in this regard, as well. People will decide that a chair in a classroom or conference room is "theirs" and no-one else should sit in it. And I have caught myself taking personal offense that someone else purchased that last ginger cookie *right fucking in front of me because they totally knew I wanted it and they are trying to hurt me*. Ahem. Humans definitely have territorial issues, don't we?

Sexual Boundaries: Sexual boundaries include the physical and emotional aspects of sex. They also cover information about our sexual selves: Who we like, what we like to do with the people we like, etc. They're about acceptable language, ideas, and information around sexuality. They're about terms you use surrounding sex and if jokes about sex are funny or offensive to you. Sex is such an important part of most people's lives that our boundaries around sex are *way* bigger than the sexual acts we engage in.

Emotional-Relational Boundaries: Emotional-relational boundaries are not just about how we want to feel and how others want to feel. They are even more about demonstrating our respect for our

own personhood and the personhood of others. We respect these boundaries through how we care for others, and by letting them have their own emotional experiences. But also, they are about not taking responsibility for other people's emotions (because we've all dealt with someone in a raunchy mood who tried to release that pressure valve onto us).

Intellectual Boundaries: Intellectual boundaries are about our thoughts, beliefs, and ideas and how they are respected. They are also about our access to information, ideas, and opportunities to learn. They are separate from emotional boundaries because someone can be emotionally kind (sorta) but not respect your worldview. And someone can think you are brilliant and wise, but still treat you like shit in other ways.

Spiritual Boundaries: Spiritual boundaries are about our belief systems, how we practice them, and what we choose to share around these beliefs. This is different from intellectual boundaries because spirituality is our human experience of purposeful belonging. It's a self-in-relation to something bigger than our own emotional and intellectual experiences, and that can be a point of bigger vulnerability for many people. Spiritual boundary violations could take the form of forcing someone to pray who doesn't want to, or not letting someone pray who does want to.

Time Boundaries: These are boundaries regarding one of our most precious resources: the expenditure of our minutes, hours, and days. There are plenty of things that I'm super interested in doing and that don't cross my intellectual, emotional, or other types of boundaries, but I don't have the physical time to invest in them. You totally know what I mean by that, you've been there, too, right?

What are some of the boundaries that you have for each of these categories?

Which kinds of boundary violations (see page 27) do you experience the most? Which categories do those violations belong in?

Which kinds of boundaries do you have the most difficulty respecting for others? Which categories do those violations belong ?

With whom do you find it most difficult to set healthy boundaries?

Which areas do you want to affect change in regarding your boundaries?

What steps will you take to start creating these changes?

How do you expect others to react to these changes?

What skills can you use to handle their reactions?

How will your life be different once you have made these changes?

Gut Check Your Boundaries

Think about these questions and write down the first answers that come to mind.

What are some of your **physical boundaries**? Are they rigid, flexible, or permeable?

Are there any issues you want to address regarding your physical boundaries? Anything you want to explore?

What are some of your **property boundaries**? Are they rigid, flexible, or permeable?

Are there any issues you want to address regarding your property boundaries? Anything you want to explore?

What are some of your **sexual boundaries**? Are they rigid, flexible, or permeable?

Are there any issues you want to address regarding your sexual boundaries? Anything you want to explore?

What are some of your **emotional-relational boundaries**? Are they rigid, flexible, or permeable?

Are there any issues you want to address regarding your emotional-relational boundaries? Are they rigid, flexible, or permeable?

What are some of your **intellectual boundaries**? Are they rigid, flexible, or permeable?

Are there any issues you want to address regarding your intellectual boundaries? Are they rigid, flexible, or permeable?

What are some of your **spiritual boundaries**? Are they rigid, flexible, or permeable?

Are there any issues you want to address regarding your spiritual boundaries? Are they rigid, flexible, or permeable?

What are some of your **time boundaries**? Are they rigid, flexible, or permeable?

Are there any issues you want to address regarding your time boundaries? Are they rigid, flexible, or permeable?

Now it's officially time for the gut check.

Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and ask yourself the same questions again.

Pay attention to how you feel *physically* (this is important!!) and write that down next to your answers above.

When you read all those questions above, what was your *emotional* response? Not what you *think* you should have answered, not what you know the intellectual answer to be, but what your *body* tells you the answer actually is.

Did anything new come up?

Was there anything that your body reminded you about that you had initially not listed?

How Flexible Are Your Boundaries?

On this page, mark down how rigid, flexible, or permeable your boundaries are in each category. This is about how you hold boundaries in these categories, not about how others respond to your boundaries (the next exercise is for that!). Maybe it depends—there's room to explain or clarify below each category.

TYPE	RIGID	FLEXIBLE	PERMEABLE
PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES			
PROPERTY BOUNDARIES			
SEXUAL BOUNDARIES			
EMOTIONAL/ RELATIONAL BOUNDARIES			
INTELLECTUAL BOUNDARIES			
SPIRITUAL BOUNDARIES			
TIME BOUNDARIES			

How Others Respect Your Boundaries

How well do other people respect your boundaries? Check the box that describes the level of respect for each boundary type you feel from the people around you the majority of the time. If there are big exceptions—like, most people respect your property except for that one co-worker—make a note.

If you end up checking a lot of "sometimes" and "rarely," we have some good tools to help you out with that...check out the Communication section (see page 58) of this workbook to help you develop the practical stills you need to better verbalize your boundaries with everyone around you.

On the other hand, if you find you're checking a lot of "it depends," there may be some people in your life who have particular trouble respecting your boundaries.

Check out the Identifying Abuse (see page 106) of this workbook if so.

TYPE	USUALLY	RARELY	IT DEPENDS
PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES			
PROPERTY BOUNDARIES			
SEXUAL BOUNDARIES			
EMOTIONAL/ RELATIONAL BOUNDARIES			
INTELLECTUAL BOUNDARIES			
SPIRITUAL BOUNDARIES			
TIME BOUNDARIES			

How You Respect Others' Boundaries

How well do you respect other people's boundaries? This one is hard, right? I'm pretty sure if I ran the world and everyone did what I said it would work far better.

But I'm not the decider, which means I have to respect people's boundaries.

How about you?

Check the box that describes how likely you are to show respect for these different types of boundaries. If there are big exceptions—like, you usually respect people's spiritual autonomy but you just can't seem to get off your sibling's case about the church they choose to attend—make a note below.

If you end up checking a lot of boxes that aren't "usually," check out the Respecting Others Boundaries section (page 70) to help you work on this stuff.

TYPE	USUALLY	RARELY	IT DEPENDS
PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES			
PROPERTY BOUNDARIES			
SEXUAL BOUNDARIES			
EMOTIONAL/ RELATIONAL BOUNDARIES			
INTELLECTUAL BOUNDARIES			
SPIRITUAL BOUNDARIES			
TIME BOUNDARIES			

Recognizing Boundary Violations

I've defined boundaries as the constructs that differentiate between ourselves and someone else. Boundary violations can occur when that space is not negotiated in conscious and mindful ways and our actions result in harm (regardless of our intentions).

This is very much about consent. Consent is used as a buzzword that confuses a lot of people, but in practice it's a simple concept. Consent is *the informed, voluntary permission given or agreement reached for an activity/exchange between two or more sentient beings*. When it comes to the expression and negotiation of our boundaries, we generally do so through how we communicate consent. If someone asks you "Hey, can I borrow this book?" they are recognizing that the book is something you own (property boundary!), and are asking for your consent to use it and return it. You are then free to give your consent, not give it, or give it conditionally.

Boundary violations are what happen when we act without consent.

Pia Mellody, author of *Facing Codependence*, points out two main categories of boundary violations. Her categories are, simply enough, external and internal.

1) *External Boundary Violations* are when people do something to you in a physical way. Touching you without your permission. Taking your shit without you agreeing for them to do so. External boundary violations are tangible and measurable.

2) *Internal Boundary Violations* are when people violate your emotional space and try to get your to change your behavior and actions to suit their needs without requesting that change honestly. It's manipulative shit. Sometimes this takes the form of coercive control, which we get into later in the book.

For this exercise, go through the list and check off where you've violated others' boundaries, and where other people have violated yours. At the end of each section there's room to write in more because there are a ton of ways we can violate each others' boundaries!

This stuff is all super intense, right? If you are developing a clincial case of the yucky feelings, feel free to skip ahead to the grounding exercises in part 2 whenever you need them.

I HAVE DONE THIS TO SOMEONE	SOMEONE HAS DONE THIS TO ME	EXTERNAL BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**SEXUAL ABUSE**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**PHYSICAL ABUSE**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**UNWANTED TOUCH** (including touch at times someone doesn't want to be touched, in ways they don't want to be touched, and in places the person doesn't want to be touched)
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**ENTERING SOMEONE'S LIVING SPACE WITHOUT CONSENT**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**CUTTING IN FRONT OF SOMEONE IN LINE WITHOUT CONSENT**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**NOT CLEANING UP ONE'S OWN MESS**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**USING ANOTHER PERSON'S PROPERTY WITHOUT CONSENT**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**NOT RETURNING OR BEING LATE TO RETURN PROPERTY** (even if it was borrowed with consent)
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**NOT ADHERING TO TIME AGREEMENTS** (being perpetually late or uncomfortably early)
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**TAKING CONTROL OF SOMEONE ELSE'S CHILD WHEN THEIR PARENT OR GUARDIAN IS PRESENT**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**MOVING IN TO LIVE LIVE WITH ANOTHER PERSON WITHOUT PERMISSION**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**SMOKING IN FRONT OF OTHERS OR IN THEIR LIVING SPACE WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT**

I HAVE DONE THIS TO SOMEONE	SOMEONE HAS DONE THIS TO ME	INTERNAL BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**ASKING PERSONAL QUESTIONS OUTSIDE OF THE DEPTH OF THE RELATIONSHIP**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**ASKING OTHERS TO JUSTIFY THEIR ACTIONS OR VIEWPOINTS WHEN NEITHER IMPACT US**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**GIVING FEEDBACK ABOUT SOMEONE'S BEHAVIOR WHEN IT DOESN'T AFFECT US**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**LISTENING TO THE PHONE CONVERSATIONS OF OTHERS**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**READING OTHERS' DIARIES, LETTERS, EMAILS, OR PRIVATE MESSAGES**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**SHARING SECRETS OR THINGS TOLD TO US IN CONFIDENCE** (gossiping counts here)
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**ASSUMING THE FEELINGS OF OTHERS**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**ASSUMING THE REASONS FOR OTHERS' BEHAVIOR**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**ASSUMING OTHERS' THOUGHTS**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**MAKING DEMANDS INSTEAD OF REQUESTS**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**EXPRESSING "ADVICE" OR "CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM"** *when it was unsolicited and/or is offered for the sole purpose of hurting the person who is the recipient of the comments.*
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**TREATING SOMEONE IN A CONDESCENDING WAY** (talking to people as if they were a child or slow to understand)
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**JUDGING OTHERS**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**USING ABUSIVE LANGUAGE**

I HAVE DONE THIS TO SOMEONE	SOMEONE HAS DONE THIS TO ME	BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS THAT COULD BE BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**SHARING PERSONAL INFORMATION ABOUT ONESELF WITHOUT CHECKING OUT IF THE HEAR-ER WANTS TO HEAR IT**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**MISGENDERING SOMEONE**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**USING TRANSPHOBIC OR TRANS-EXCLUSIONARY LANGUAGE**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**USING RACIST, OR RACIALLY STEREOTYPED LANGUAGE**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**ASKING FOR EXCESSIVE OR INAPPROPRIATE FAVORS**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**EXPECTING A FAVOR EXCHANGE** (giving favors assuming favors will be given in return)
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**TRIANGULATING** (trying to use a third party to control someone)
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**PUSHING PAST SOMEONE'S "NO"** (or any limits they have set)
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**HELPING SOMEONE WITHOUT FIRST ASKING IF THEY WOULD LIKE HELP**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**INTERRUPTING SOMEONE WHILE THEY ARE TALKING**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**TRYING TO FORCE ADULTS TO LIVE BY SOMEONE ELSE'S MORAL AND ETHICAL STANDARDS**
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**INTRUDING AT A GATHERING,** *such as joining others at a restaurant without being invited*
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**CONTINUED PURSUIT OF A RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS INDICATED THAT THEY ARE NOT INTERESTED** (regardless if they had maintained a relationship in the past)
Past ☐ Present ☐	Past ☐ Present ☐	**INDULGING OUR DESIRES AT THE EXPENSE OR HARM OF ANOTHER**

Were there any boundary violations listed that you hadn't really thought of as being boundaries before?

Were they internal, external, or both?

Are there certain types of boundary violations that you have experienced more often than others historically?

What about in the present?

Are there certain types of boundary violations that you have been guilty of (even unintentionally) in the past?

What about in the present?

Values Clarification

Values clarification exercises help us determine what we find the most important in life. And how we describe ourselves and perceive ourselves (if we are doing so congruently) is usually a reflection of that. Our boundaries should come from what we hold as valuable in our lives.

If there is a disconnect between our values and our actions, this is a chance to pay attention to that experience and set yourself back on course.

The big challenge with many people, is defining what their values are. Rather than the values that others have imposed upon them. Whether parents or other caretakers when they were young, friends, or society as a whole. Aligning with our own values adds a sense of mission to the "getting better" part of unfuckening.

Many people don't have a language to articulate their values. So here's a huge list of potential values (plus space to write in more of your own) .

Acceptance

Badassitude

Accountability

Accuracy

Achievement

Adaptability

Advocacy

Allyship

Ambition

Artistic expression

Artistic interactions

Assertive

Attentive

Balance

Beauty

Boldness

Bravery

Brilliance

Calm

Candor

Carefulness

Certainty

Challenge

Clean

Clear

Clever

Comfort

Commitment

Common sense

Communication

Community

Compassion for animals

Compassion for fellow humans

Competence

Concentration

Confidence

Connection
Consciousness
Consistency
Contentment
Contribution
Control
Convenience
Conviction
Cool
Cooperation
Courage
Courtesy
Creation
Creativity
Credibility
Curiosity
Decisiveness
Defeating fascism
Dependability
Design
Determination
Development
Devotion
Dignity
Discipline
Discovery
Dismantling oppressive systems
Dynamic
Effective
Efficient
Empathy
Empowerment
Endurance
Energy
Enjoyment
Enthusiasm
Social Justice
Ethical
Excellence
Experience
Exploration
Expressive
Fairness
Family
Fame
Fearless
Feelings
Feminism
Intersectionality
Ferocious
Fidelity
Focus
Foresight
Fortitude
Freedom
Friendship
Fun
Generosity
Genius
Giving
Goodness
Grace
Gratitude
Greatness
Growth
Happiness
Hard work
Tenacity
Hard-working
Harmony
Health
Honesty
Honor
Hope
Humility
Humor
Hygge
Imagination
Independence

Individuality
Influence
Innovation
Insight
Inspiring
Integrity
Intelligence
Intensity
Intuition
Irreverent
Joy
Justice
Kindness
Knowledge
Lawful
Leadership
Learning
Logic
Love
Loyalty
Magic
Mastery
Maturity
Meaning
Moderation
Motivation
Nazi-Punching
Nesting
Neutrality
Openness
Optimism
Organization
Originality
Passion
Patience
Peace
Performance
Persistence
Physicality
Playfulness
Poise
Potential
Power
Practical
Present
Productivity
Professionalism
Prosperity
Purpose
Queerness
Questioning authority
Realistic
Reason
Recognition
Reflective
Relaxation
Representation
Respect
Responsibility
Results-oriented
Righteousness
Rigor
Risk
Satisfaction
Security
Self-care
Self-compassion
Self-reliance
Selflessness
Sensitivity
Serenity
Service
Sexuality
Sharing
Silence
Simplicity
Sincerity
Skill
Solitude
Spiritual

Spontaneous
Stability
Status
Stewardship
Storytelling
Strength
Structure
Success
Support
Surprise
Tree-hugging
Teamwork
Sobriety
Thorough
Thoughtful
Timeliness
Tolerance
Toughness
Traditional
Transparency
Trust
Truth
Understanding
Uniqueness
Unity
Vigor
Vision
Vulnerability
Wealth
Welcoming
Winning
Wisdom
Wonder

Have values that aren't on this list? Write in your own.

Map Your Values

Values from the People who Raised Me (Parents, Guardians, Other Family Members, etc.)

Values from Other Important People In My Life (Friends, Partners)

Values Specific to my Local Community/Cultural Heritage

Values From my Larger Community

Values I Would Most Like to Live by

Values I Am Currently Living by

My Authentic Self

Here's a place to take the core elements of the work you did regarding your personal values to create a snapshot of your essential identity.

I am

I am not

I want

I do not want

I will

I will not

Honoring Your Values through Your Boundaries

You've got your core values listed (good work, there!) and you used it to distill down some fundamentals about your authentic self (kicking workbook ass!!!!). Now, here is the place to funnel those ideas into action (and by action I mean proactive boundaries!).

Use this worksheet to plan out how you'll achieve or experience the values you identified as the ones you would most like to live by.

Value	Actions I need to take	Limits I need to set

Your Ideal Funeral

Imagine your own funeral. You have lived a long and meaningful life and the eulogy that is being given in your honor discusses who you are and what you accomplished. Who is giving it? What do they say?

An Exercise in Voice

Audre Lorde was a Caribbean born feminist, activist, poet, writer, and lesbian who died of cancer in 1992, at the same time I was just discovering her work. She is perhaps best known for saying *"The Master's tools will never dismantle the Master's house."* The original essay that quote came from can be found in her collection of essays and speeches, *Sister Outsider*.

The essential idea behind this quote is that we cannot effect change by playing by the rules that we had no voice in creating. These old rules (hello again, rape culture) that surround us are designed to maintain oppression, not give us voice to rise up.

The questions become: *How do we begin to get our voice back?* and *How do we learn to speak our truth with safety?*

This fundamental question is a brilliant starting point for shed our social conditioning and past experiences which have served to silence our authentic voice which is necessary for the recognition and communication of healthy boundaries. Audre Lorde's original text, from her book *The Cancer Journals* is in bold. My therapist-y interpretations is in italics underneath.

1. What are the words you do not have yet?
What experiences have you had for which there are no words to properly describe what has happened?

2. What do you need to say?

What are the things you have not yet shared? Maybe not even to yourself. Maybe because the words have not been available. List as many things as you need to list.

3. What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence?

What do you take on that is not yours, no matter how often you are told that it is? What is imposed upon you that you suffer through in order to put food on the table? To remain connected to others? To survive? This list is ever growing and ever changing. Change the list as often as need be.

4. If we have been socialized to respect fear more than our own need for language, ask yourself: "What's the worst that could happen to me if I tell this truth?"

What is the worst thing that could happen? What is the best? What is the most likely? Is it worth speaking up right now? If not, what would need to change to make it worth it?

Personal Bill of Rights

Our values and ideals identify how we navigate the world with respect for ourselves and for others. Considering our personal bill of rights helps us be mindful of how we navigate the world, especially if our wants and needs weren't respected when we were growing up. I've included a few to get you started that you can either keep or reject as you see fit!.

1. I have the right to claim responsibility for my own emotional reactions.
2. I have the right to communicate honestly and expect honest communication in return.
3. I have the right to determine my own priorities.
4. I have the right to say "no" with or without explanation.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

It's Not My Job

This tool is a helpful reminder that you are not responsible for the feelings of others. When you have a relationship with someone, you can choose to hold space for their experience, but that isn't the same thing as becoming their emotional caretaker.

Here's a chance to remind yourself of responsibilities that are not yours to manage. I've added a few to get you started which you can keep or discard as needed.

1) It's not my job to fix other people.

2) It's not my job to take responsibility for other people's feelings.

3) It's not my job to agree with other people's opinions or beliefs.

4) It's not my job to anticipate the needs of those around me.

5)

6)

7)

8)

9)

10)

Red Flags/Green Flags

We talk about red flags pretty regularly at this point, including in this workbook, where there is a whole checklist of coercive control red flags. But we don't generally look at what the green flags look like in comparison. Recognizing the signs of someone that's likely trustworthy is just as important as recognizing the signs of someone that isn't. Here's a place to track your own red/flags and green flags, plus a few ideas to get you started. Think about occasions where individuals demonstrated to you that they either respect your boundaries or were unwilling to do so. Or situations you have witnessed with others. Also? Consider listing your "ideals" in terms of green flags. This helps you think about the kind of people you want to be on the lookout for in your life so you can nurture relationships with them!

RED FLAGS

Argues with you when you say you don't want to do something

Interrogates you about your boundaries/ ways of thinking

GREEN FLAGS

Expresses disappointment but respects your answer

Ask questions to better understand your experience

Attachment Styles Map

Our early experiences affect what therapist types call a*ttachment styles*, which basically just means the dynamics of how we navigate our interpersonal relationships. For many people, their early childhood attachment styles affect their later relationships and how they recognize and establish boundaries with friends, family, and partners.

So let's start with the three attachment styles in a nutshell:

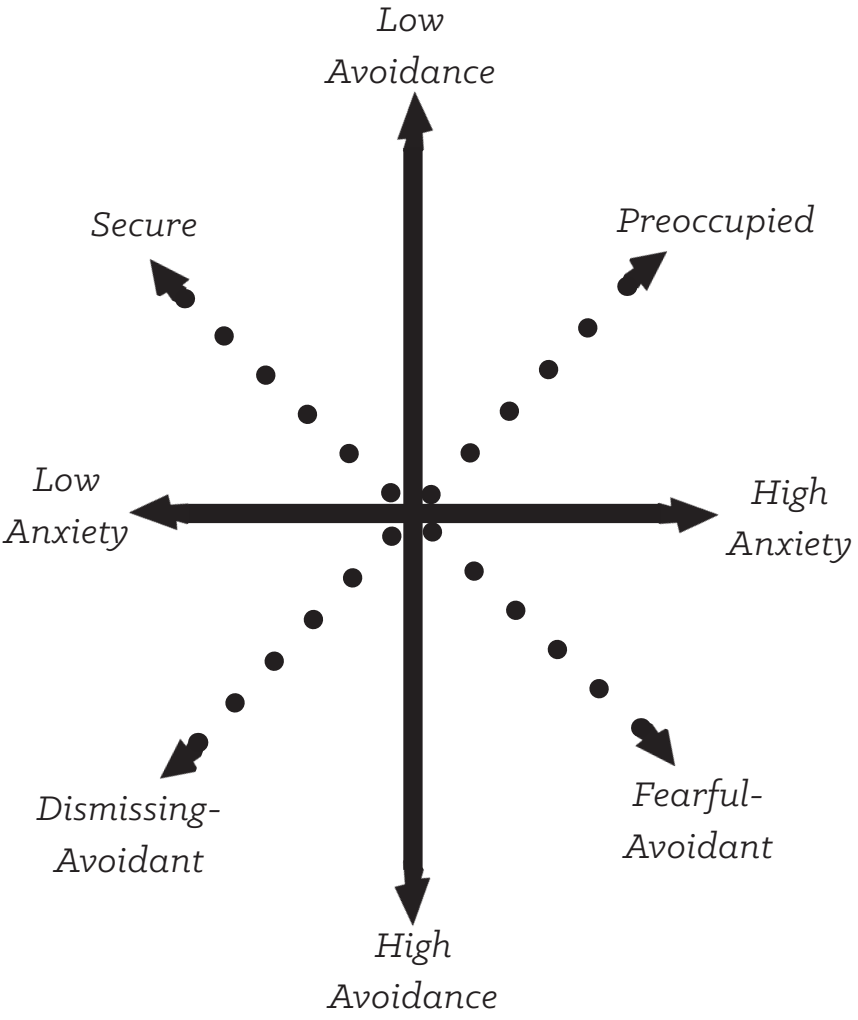
Secure Attachment: Research shows that about 60% of us had secure attachments. Secure attachment people generally feel comfortable with others. They feel safe depending on someone and having that person depend on them. They don't freak out constantly that they are going to be abandoned or that someone is going to get too close. You know, like generally pretty healthy. Fucking weirdos. Secure attachment people tend to have healthy and flexible boundaries because they have generally found life to not be a scary place to be. They can express what they need with the expectation that that need will be honored, but also don't mind being challenged a little because they expect others to have their best interest and personal growth at heart.

Avoidant Attachment: About 20% of us have an attachment style that is termed avoidant. These are the people who have a hard time trusting or depending on others and are generally uncomfortable with the level of closeness that others want from them. Avoidant attachment people are the ones who are most likely to have pretty rigid boundaries. Their life experiences make their brains scream things like *fuck all these fuckers, they aren't to be trusted.*

Anxious Attachment: The final 20% of us (which you already figured out because you can math) have anxious attachment styles. They often worry that people won't love them or want to be with them or that they are going to scare their partner away. They often crave a closeness with others that they never quite get. Anxious attachment people tend to have more permeable boundaries, as they try to please others by letting themselves be walked over on the regular.

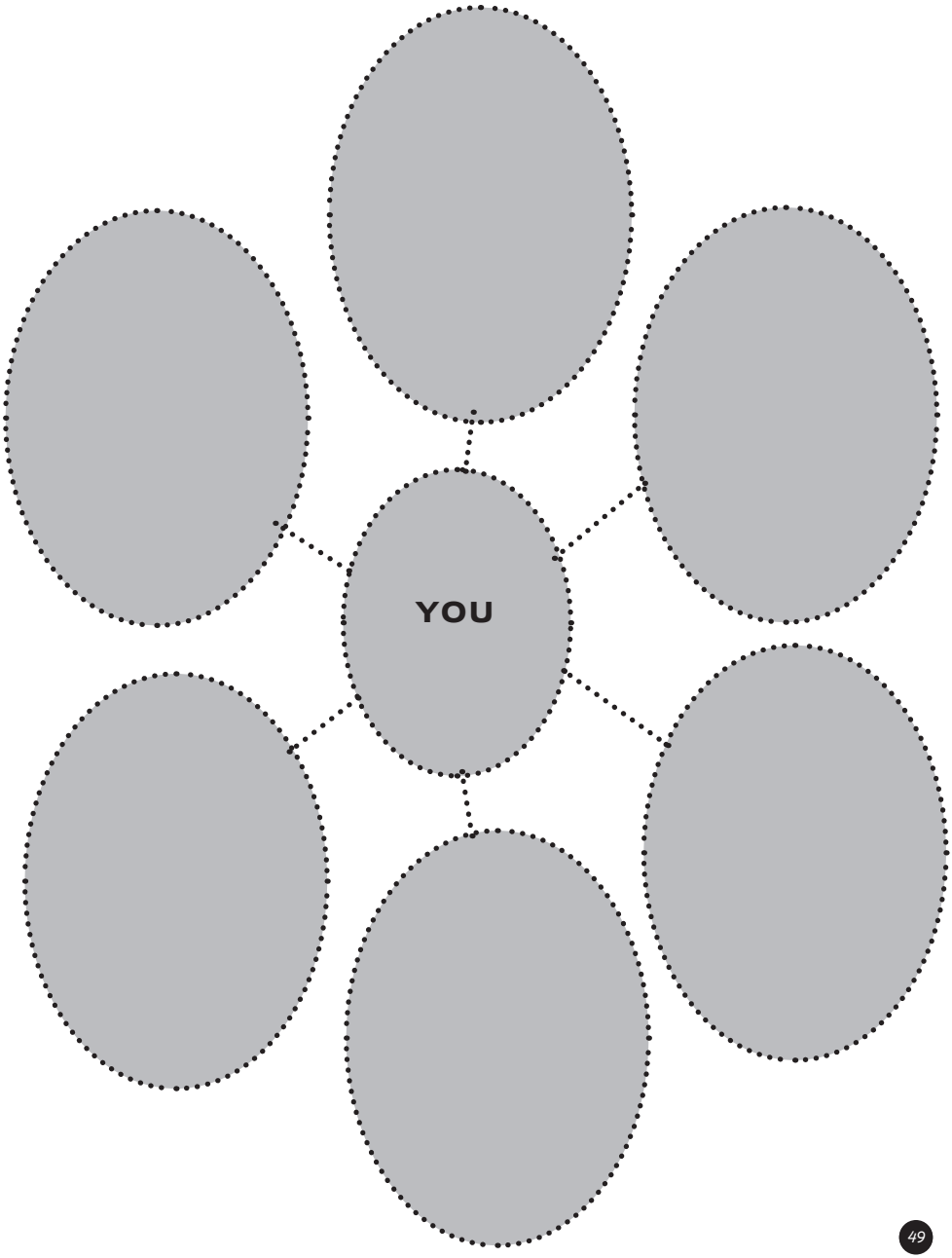
These were the basic categories identified by researchers in the late 70s and early 80s. The attachment styles were first noticed in children and their relationships with their caregivers and was carried forth to adults to see if these attachment styles held true in adult relationships.

These categories make a lot of sense but don't really account for all the different ways these attachment styles actually show up in our day to day lives. Further research in the 90s showed that avoidant and anxious attachments are not necessarily an either/or scenario. To complete the fuckery, some people experience both. So our attachment responses can look like any of the following:



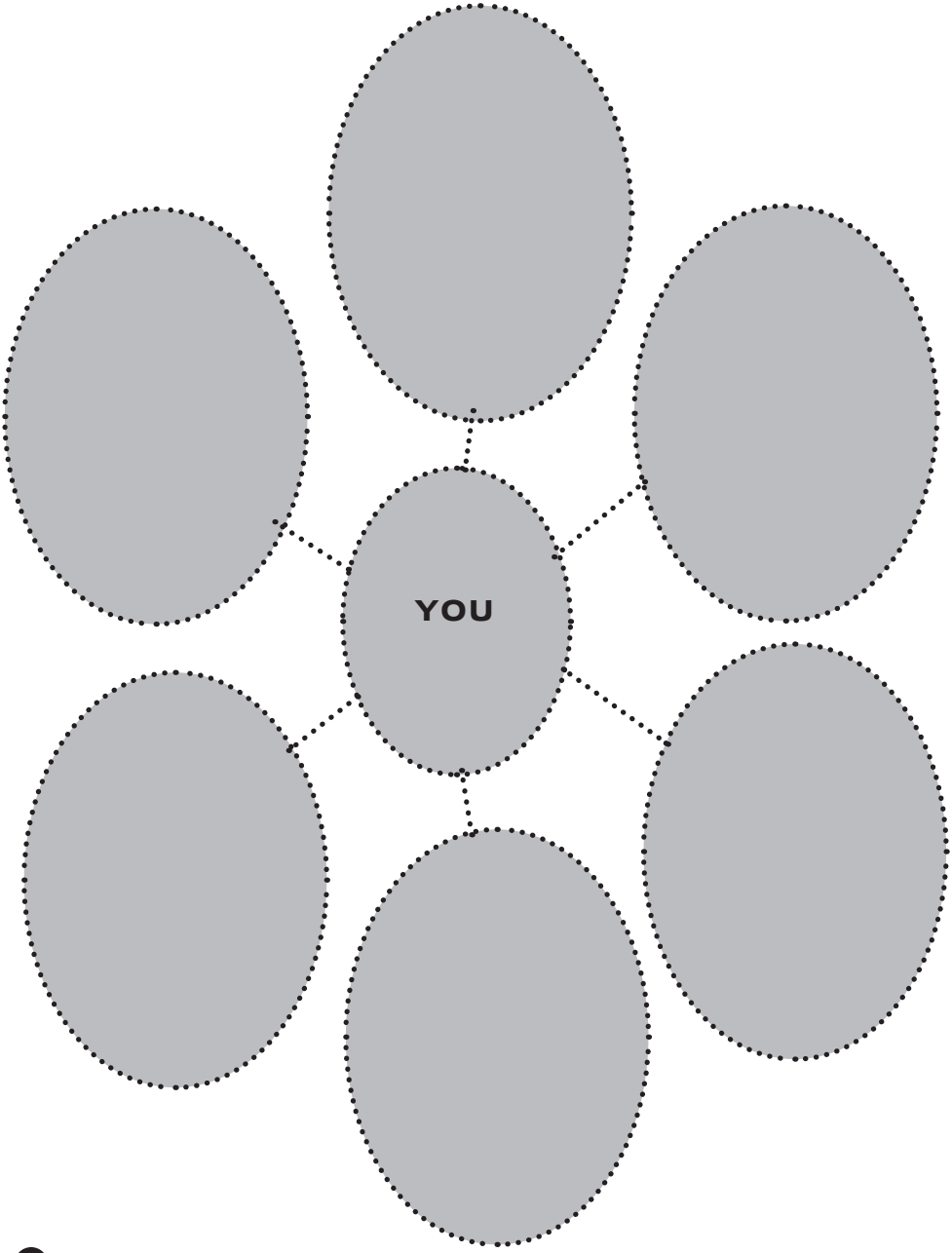
YOUR RELATIONSHIPS GROWING UP

In each circle, write the name of someone close to you and your attachment dynamic with them.



YOUR RELATIONSHIPS NOW

In each circle, write the name of someone close to you and your attachment dynamic with them.



Questions For Consideration

How were your parents and other caretakers withdrawn or distant from you? What did they not know or understand about you? In what ways did they not support you or show up for you?

How did that affect your view of them and the world?

What rules about people did you develop based on these patterns?

How were your parents and other caretakers entangled with you? How did they use you to meet their needs? What values, beliefs, and preferences did they have that they expected you to share).

How did that affect your view of them and the world?

What rules about people did you develop based on these patterns?

How have these worldviews and rules affected your current relationships?

Do you notice any correlation between your attachment patterns and having boundaries that are too rigid?

What about boundaries that are too permeable?

Learning Your Body's Responses

This is a great exercise to try with another person (and can be done in a group training where everyone has a chance to process their experiences after). Touch can be involved (shaking hands, hugging, etc.) in this activity but doesn't have to be. Instead, you can try it with borrowing/using something that belongs to you, or getting closer in someone's space without actually touching.

The point is to practice learning how your body responds when you agree to something that you don't really want to do, *and* when you decline to do or disagree with something you really *do* want to do. It helps you discover your boundaries within your physical body by listening to the cues. Take note of your reactions and write them down below.

In this activity come up with things that you do want to do with the person you are practicing with...and don't want to do (but nothing awful or triggering... just something you wouldn't be thrilled with outside the parameters of this experiment, like letting them look through your bag or put their arm around your shoulder or something). Practice saying "yes" when you mean it as well as when you don't mean it. Then the same with "no." Notice what goes on in your body.

AUTHENTIC YES

INAUTHENTIC YES

AUTHENTIC NO

INAUTHENTIC NO

Did you have any "I don't know/I'm not sure/Maybe/I feel confused" experiences? What did those feel like?

GROUNDING EXERCISES

In the *Unfuck Your Boundaries* book we talk about backdraft as a common occurrence when setting healthy boundaries for the first time. Backdraft is a term borrowed from the work of Kristen Neff and Chistopher Germer to explain the feelings of guilt and discomfort we often feel when we start doing the difficult work of self care.

When feelings of discomfort arise, try the following:

1) Label the feeling for what it is, without beating yourself up. Use the same kindness you would use if you were talking to someone you love. "Oh, ok. That's backdraft. That's really normal. In fact that's a good sign that I'm doing difficult work."

2) Check in with yourself, especially note your body sensations and your emotions and ask yourself "What do I need to feel safe right now so I can continue this good work instead of falling into old habits?"

3) Take any appropriate action steps (torching the world is not an appropriate action step, I've heard so take that off the list)

4) If nothing pragmatic can be done, use a grounding skill to stay centered in your body until the feelings subside enough for you to feel back in the present moment. This part of the book is full of exercises you can use to calm yourself down.

Grounding Statement

Part of how the brain thinks it is keeping us safe is to tell us a story about the past, layering it onto the present so we perceive ourselves as reliving a traumatic situation. It's a great safety mechanism in actual dangerous situations...but it does nothing to help us deal with past issues so we can heal and move forward.

This is a simple exercise for when our brain does this. I encourage everyone to create a grounding statement that reminds them that they are in the present and doing important work. Stuff like:

1) This is only a memory. Memories suck, but they can't hurt me.

2) In the past, I was a victim. Now I am a survivor.

Come up with one that works for you, make a note of it below and use the shit out of it as needed.

Stop! Grounding Time: 5...4...3...2...1

Becauuuuuse. That was more rough stuff. So here's a chance to check in with yourself, make sure you're in the present and not super-activated. This grounding skill engages the five senses, which are the ways we connect to and stay present with the world around us. Give it a whirl. Or a count. Semantics.

1. Notice and name (in your out-loud voice or inside-your-brain voice) **five** things you **see** around you.
2. Now notice and name off **four** things around you that you can **touch.** You don't have to actually touch them, but you are totally welcome to.
3. Now notice and name off **three** things that you **hear.**
4. Now notice **two** things you can **smell.** It's totally kosher to go find something like the soap in the bathroom or something.

Now notice **one** thing you can **taste.** You can go find something to taste if you that's handy, but you can also just notice that you still taste your sandwich from lunch, or your toothpaste from earlier in the morning. Whatever works.

A Loving-Kindness Boundaries Meditation

Loving-kindness (also known as metta or maitri meditation) is about honoring our desire to be free from suffering. It's a Buddhist concept—the more secular version is self-compassion. Self-compassion is the process of affecting positive change in our lives by being mindful of our experiences instead of being a total dick to ourselves for being fallible humans since doing so doesn't do anything to make us do better in the long run.

And boundary work is critical to self-compassion.

Self-compassion researchers Kristen Neff and Christopher Germer suggest that in order to find a loving-kindness mantra for yourself, you ask yourself:

What do I need? What do I truly need?

This process is a wonderful tool for figuring out your boundaries, and holding them mindfully. This is typically done using the phrase "May I…" because Buddhist teachings use "may I" as a way of pointing the heart in a positive direction. Examples may include:

May I be free from unwanted touch

May I be respected for my beliefs

May I have space to think, feel, and dream

And it's okay if you have no fucking clue what you need. It really is. Realizing that you don't know something is the first step to figuring it out. After all, you were bopping along not even realizing that there was something there you weren't attending to, right? Maybe for you, the meditation is more like:

May I learn to tune into my authentic inner voice.

May I be compassionate to myself for struggling with this process.

May I be patient with myself as I discover what is important to me.

That's a weird little trick of the mind, isn't it? The idea that noticing that doing something is hard makes actually doing it a bit easier. Getting better isn't magical and instantaneous, but if you keep at it you will see results. Pinky swear.

Measuring Your Breath by Your Footsteps

Find a place where you can walk relatively unencumbered. It doesn't have to be a straight path—walking in circles in your yard or around the parking lot of where you work is fine (and it worries people about your sanity so, bonus points, they will leave you alone).

Breathe normally. Meaning normal for you. Just however you breathe.

Cool. Walking and breathing. Got it?

Now figure out how many steps it takes for you to do an inhale and exhale cycle. There will be a rhythm to it. Everyone is a little different. Keep that shit up for a few more minutes. Walking and breathing...you are totally acing this whole therapeutic intervention thing like a boss. GETTIT.

Okay. Now lengthen your out-breath by one extra step. Don't force it, let it ease into a longer outbreath naturally.

But you may notice a desire to lengthen your inhalation breath as well. If it feels good to do so, go ahead. Roll with this cycle for another 10 breaths.

Now lengthen the exhalation by one more footstep. Watch to see whether the inhalation also naturally lengthens by one step or not. Do the thing if your body is into it. Continue this pattern for 20 more breath cycles.

Now return to your normal breathing pattern. Are you still in the parking lot? Nobody has called for a mental health team to do a welfare check on you, have they? If you are still okay to keep walking, continue with your original (normal) breathing pattern for another 5 minutes.

If you are feeling it, move back to the lengthened breaths again, but for no more than 10 to 20 cycles before going back to your normal breathing (we don't want you getting lightheaded out there in the parking lot, after all).

Stop whenever you're ready. You're in charge of you.

Appreciative Inquiry

In mental health, some of the best communication tools we teach people actually come from the business world. This exercise, from *The Five Wisdom Energies: A Buddhist Way of Understanding Personalities, Emotions, and Relationships* by Irini Rockwell is drawn from industrial psychology and is used in companies to build teamwork. It's designed to help us become more conscious of our desires and habitual patterns so we can communicate more effectively in . If boundaries are our relational building blocks, than this is a wonderful way to figure out what those boundaries should be. Especially if all this boundary talk seems overwhelming and un-doable.

The first time I did this exercise it was with my son. He was probably 15 at the time (so not an age where you suffer your mom's bullshit gladly). The fact that he ended up really liking it says a lot.

If you complete this exercise with someone else, take turns being the interviewer. You can ask for more information in a positive way ("Oh, wow! I'd love to hear more about that!"), but don't judge, correct, or cross-examine their answers. Do not add your own response until the other person has gone through each question. After the exercise is completed you switch roles, and your partner asks the same questions of you and listens to your answers.

This exercise is meant to help crystalize our longer-term relational goals and the best ways we can support them.

What are the times in your life that you have felt the best about yourself?

What are the times in your life that you have felt the best about your relationships with others?

What outside circumstances helped make these good experiences possible?

What things were other people doing or what qualities did they have that helped create experiences that were good for you?

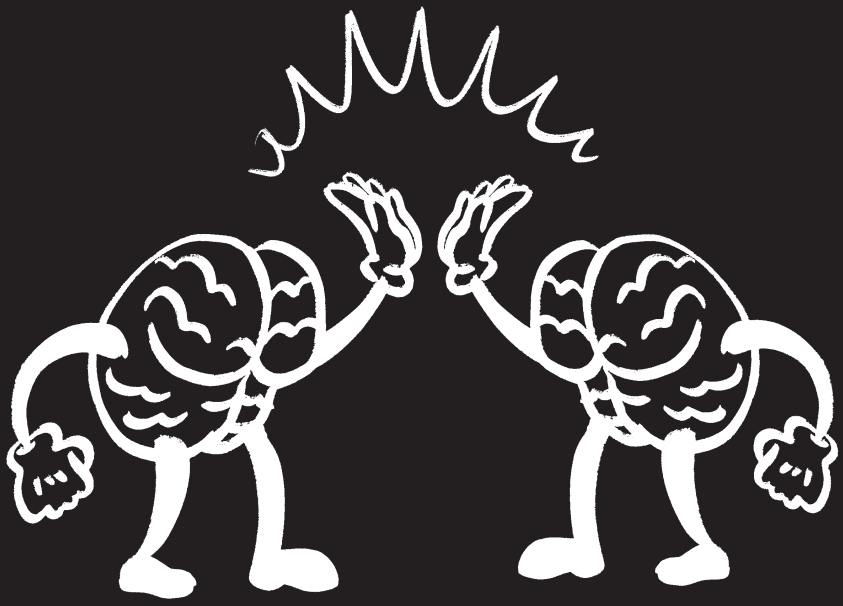
What things were you doing or what qualities within you helped create these good experiences?

What goals, hopes, and dreams do you have for yourself and for your relationships in the future? What would you like your relationships look like 5 years from now?

What would you like to see yourself contributing to make that happen?

Now is your opportunity to take this information and reshape or create boundaries that will support them coming to fruition. Do you have any current boundaries that are either too rigid or too permeable to help facilitate these changes? Any boundaries you need to dump entirely? Any new you need to add?

COMMUNICATE YOUR BOUNDARIES



So if some badass teacher somewhere in your educational history had said "Guess what bitches, put down the outdated textbook because today we are going to learn how to effectively communicate with one another!" this section wouldn't exist. And I might not even have a job. But likely no-one ever got that class.

And most everyone I talk to really struggles with communicating effectively. Especially those of us who are conflict avoidant. Having good skills to utilize really helps the process. Let's drop the bullshit textbooks and learn something valuable, what do you say?

A good basic idea to understand is that each exchange of verbal dialogue has four levels:

1) *What we mean to say.* You know, the actual idea you are trying to express.

2) *What we actually say.* If you are really good at saying only exactly what you mean at all times, I hope you write a book on your technique. For us regular humans, what we have in our minds and what comes out of our mouths is not always a solid match.

3) *What the other person hears.* Just because you said it doesn't mean they heard it without any filter.

4) *What the other person thinks you mean.* Even if you said "anything for dinner is fine" and you *meant* anything for dinner is fine, your partner may think there is a hidden agenda, or other things going on beyond the words that actually came out of your mouth.

As you do the exercises in this part of the book, reflect on your past communications, and keep this list in mind during future communication. You'll be seriously amazed by what you notice.

Communicating with "I Statements"

If we taught "I statement" communication in kindergarten, I wouldn't have a job. It invokes a language of responsibility for our own emotional content, while sharing with others how their behavior has informed our emotional content.

Communicating in this way is going to feel weird and difficult at first, because it simply isn't how people discuss their emotions in this country.

My favorite story is the client I had years ago who started her I statement by saying *"I feel you're being an asshole!"* Funny as hell. Not an I statement.

Some better examples:

I feel anxious when your voice gets loud during discussions. What I want is for you to not raise your voice to me.

Extra credit for explaining the "why" of what you're feeling, like this:

I feel frustrated and hurt when you agree to do the dishes before I get home and you don't do them. What I want is for you to follow through on tasks you agreed to complete. I feel cared for when you prioritize something that is important to me and I like coming home to a clean kitchen so I can start dinner right away because I'm generally starving by then.

You can even take an extra step in acknowledging that they didn't intend the distress you felt. This can go a long way into disarming a potential fight. For instance:

I felt uncomfortable when you made that joke just now. I know you just meant it to be funny and thought I would laugh rather than be upset. But I struggle with jokes about that topic because I was bullied a lot in school about that. I would really appreciate it if you didn't tell jokes like that around me.

Try this with your partner when you are all kinds of hacked off (or all kinds of thrilled, for that matter). Here's a good chance to practice using some of the more common issues that come up for you and the people you have to communicate with on a regular basis.

I feel
when you
What I want is

I feel
when you
What I want is

I feel
when you
What I want is

I feel
when you
What I want is

I feel
when you
What I want is

I feel
when you
What I want is

I feel
when you
What I want is

I feel
when you
What I want is

What's Your Communication Style?

Aggressive communication style tends to be excessively harsh. This is the general go-to for people who have rigid boundaries. Aggressive communicators tend to interrupt others, disregard others' opinions, and continually reinforce their own worldview and "rightness." *The meta-message of aggressive communicators is "I'm cool and you're a dumbass."*

Passive communication style tends to be ineffective in helping people protect themselves and hold their center, so it makes sense that this is the communicating strategy for people with permeable boundaries. Passive communicators often don't make their wants and needs known, and say that things are fine when they are really, totally, deeply not fine. Passive communicators tend to defer to others, praising them while dumping on themselves. This isn't the same thing as letting someone you know and trust help guide you to better decision-making in a crisis. This is about never feeling like you can authentically advocate for what is right for you.*The meta-message of passive communicators is "I'm a hot mess, but you're totally cool, so you make the decisions for both of us."*

Assertive communication style is our sweet spot in most cases (unless your literal safety is on the line and being situationally aggressive or passive makes sense), and is the general hallmark of people with flexible boundaries. Assertive communicators are firm in their belief systems and speak in a way that is congruent with their actions but still respects differing viewpoints. *The meta-message of assertive communicators is "I'm cool and you're totally cool, too. Even if we don't agree."*

What is your communication style most of the time? Is it different in different circumstances or with different people?

What messages have you internalized about your right to healthy communication and ownership of your values and beliefs?

If you communicate differently in certain situations, or with certain people, what about those relationships causes you to change?

How close is your current communication style to what your ideal balance would be?

What is the first place you can start to shift your communication style, moving closer to your ideal? How will you go about doing that?

Map Your Communication Style

Everyone does a little thing known as *code-switching*. I mean, if I'm chatting with fellow Choctaw people, we may get all rezzy and slangy but all of us can throw down the professional and academic vocab when the situation requires it. And if we are switching back and forth in terms of the actual words we use, we are definitely changing our our communication style in different situations as well. And that isn't always a bad thing, but it does merit awareness. Because sometimes we are adapting our communication style based on our past experiences and they aren't helpful to our present communication.

Think about different people and settings in your life.

How do you communicate in these different situations?

SETTING/PERSON	MY COMMUNICATION STYLE

Are there any areas that your communication style isn't getting your needs truly met and your boundaries respected?

What needs to change?

EXAMPLE

BIFF Statements

A powerful tool for these situations is the BIFF Response—Brief, Informative, Friendly, and Firm—paired by avoiding the 3 As—Advice, Admonishment, and Apologies. These are tools from Bill Eddy's High Conflict Institute that I teach to people on the regular. They are great tools for handling conflict and also with situations that are emotionally charged in general.

If you are in the process of establishing and holding better boundaries with someone for the first time, it's going to feel emotionally charged since it's all weird and awkward and new for everyone involved. Having a bit of a recipe will help a ton. Try this one. Add extra garlic if you're feeling sassy.

Brief: Don't give any extra info. Don't over-explain. The more you write or say, the more fodder you are giving the aggrieved party for their battle, yeah? Let's say you got an angry missive from your boss, accusing you of jacking the keys to the dumpster. Instead of writing an eight-paragraph defense, try a brief, factual response: "I clocked out two hours before closing last Thursday, so I didn't carry out the garbage that day and I never used the keys."

Informative: Don't focus on their incorrect statements, focus on your accurate ones. No sarcasm, no negging, no remarks about the other person's personality, ethical choices, etc. We are looking to end the conflict, not throw down about who the real dumbass in this scenario is. In the same work example, you might add the information, "In order to refresh my memory, I double checked the calendar. I wasn't the person who closed that day, it was Xander."

Friendly: I know, it doesn't seem fair that you have to be nice when someone else is showing their ass. The best way of coming out of

the conflict unscathed is to not match hostility with hostility. This doesn't mean fake nicey-nice...just civil. You are far more likely to get a neutral response, if not a positive one. Going back to the work example, you could phrase it as something like "Hi, Sarah! Xander and I did both work last Thursday, but I clocked out early because it was so slow and Xander closed by themself, so I don't know where the keys to the dumpster ended up."

Firm: Be firm without being threatening. Don't make comments that can invite more discussion (e.g., "Let me know if you have any questions" or "I hope you agree that…"). Back to Xander the key-stealer? You could close with "I wish I could be of more help, hopefully Xander will be." Think like Forrest Gump. As in "that's all I have to say about that." If you need to get a decision from someone and can't end the discussion here, another feature of "firm" is offering two choices so you don't have continued over-discussion.

If you get more communication after you have already BIFFed your response, you can either ignore it or broken-record your BIFF response with the same key words and even less content until they give up.

Another Bill Eddy trick for BIFF communication is to avoid the three A's: Advice, Admonishments, and Apologies. So let's look at those, as well:

Advice: You don't want to give anyone advice on how to manage themselves or the situation they are ramped up about. They are already hot under the collar so you won't get anywhere. I know I don't hear much when I'm butthurt—that's a pretty universal response. Notice that rather than telling Sarah to check the timecards in my example, I said "I double checked the calendar and confirmed…" That avoided giving her advice on how to do her job. She will realize

she should have done so herself once she calms down, so it's all good.

Admonishments: You may want to offer corrective feedback, but just like advice-giving, this isn't the time. The point of a BIFF response is to defuse an emotional conversation and end it for the time being. So avoid anything that makes it sound like you are explaining their behavior to them like they are a naughty child. Again, with Sarah the manager, imagine the continued battle if you had said, "If you had acted like an actual manager, you would have checked the schedule before having a ragefit at me"???

Apologies: Authentic apologies are a good thing. But when everyone is activated is not the time for them. Apologizing can give the other person something to blame us for, extending the conversation. "I'm so sorry I don't know what happened to the keys" can let Sarah continue to blame you for her ridiculous insistence that you are somehow responsible. A more gentle "social apology" *can* be helpful to diffuse the issue, if you want to add that to the mix, however. "I'm so sorry you are having to deal with such a frustrating situation with everything else on your plate!" is a show of commiseration and empathy that doesn't connect you to the blame game and doesn't give Sarah any more ammo.

Practice having a difficult conversation (it can be totally made up) with a friend. Or if you are doing this as a group exercise, break up in pairs and take turns. If you are using this workbook to check in with your own communication style, you can pull up an old email, DM, or text where you had to set a boundary with someone.

Upon reviewing the conversation, did you use BIFF? Did you avoid the three As? If you didn't get them all down, no worries. Use the space below to write out an alternative response that covers the parts you missed.

Yeah, I know it feels weird and dumb, but if you create a new communiation pathway in your brain, it's far easier to access that pathway when you are dealing with some upset, pushy human in the future.

- ◯ Brief
- ◯ Informative
- ◯ Friendly
- ◯ Firm
- ◯ No Advice
- ◯ No Admonishments
- ◯ No Apologies

Rewind and pick up the pieces you missed by:

RESPECTING OTHERS' BOUNDARIES

True story. A friend of mine has her niece each summer, so I get to spend time with this really cool small human on the regular. A couple of summers ago, when they first showed up at my door I bent down to hug her (because yaaay! I haven't seen her in a year and I missed her!). And she shied away. Shit, y'all. I felt awful. I bent down and said *"Thank you for showing me with your body that you didn't want a hug. It was rude of me to assume you did without asking you. I promise no one in this house will ever hug you without your permission. And you can always tell us if you don't like something."* She nodded at me and then tore through the house to find the toys and popsicles. When they left, she barreled into me for a hug and asked me to go out for raspas with her later in the week. We were good.

I never forgot that lesson. And I hope she never forgets that she is allowed body autonomy in the world, either.

And hey, just like we all have issues expressing and defending our boundaries, we all have had issues where we struggled to respect someone else's boundaries. I mean, I tried to hug a kid who hadn't seen me in a year and that was deeply uncool. But I also have never done it again. Because when we start paying attention to those patterns, we change ourselves. And since I've never met anyone who was perfect from the get-go, that's the highest level of badassery that humans can achieve.

Boundary Respect Self-Assessment

Generally speaking, do people tend to respond positively to you? Do they tell you they feel comfortable sharing with you? That you hear them without judgment?

Do you have people (or at least one person) in your life with whom you are able to have deep and authentic exchanges of ideas and feelings?

Are you able to maintain these relationships over a long period of time?

What kinds of situations make it hard for you to respect the boundaries of others? Is it with certain people? Or when people are making certain decisions that cause you concern?

Self-Accountability

Self-Accountability work is high-key expert level adulting. In a society where people do stupid shit on the regular and then victim blame, refuse to apologize, and double down on their attacks? If you refuse to be one of them and instead work to make yourself a better human you will be an absolute rarity. Boundaries accountability is a huge this because it's so symbolic of how we interact with others in the world...and it makes other forms of accountability work a piece of cake. It's completely worth the time and effort.

What are three incidents when your intent was good but your impact was damaging?

When you aren't too bummed out, make a list of the things that you've lost as a result of the behavior that you want to change. If you are working with a therapist, coach, sponsor, etc., getting support for this part may be of benefit to you.

What are some harmful or painful memories or experiences from your past that you haven't yet fully resolved?

What feedback and criticisms have other people given to you or that you've heard second hand about your behavior? Why do you think people say them?

Which of these criticisms can you accept as valid and apply to your own behavior?

Which of these pieces of feedback about your behavior do you feel like don't apply and are probably other people's stuff?

How were boundaries presented to you when you were younger? How has that informed the ways you treat others now and expect to be treated?

What, exactly, do you want to change about how you communicate and respect boundaries in relationships? State this in positive and behaviorally focused terms, e.g. "I want to listen to the viewpoints of others without interrupting in order to understand where they are coming from" is far more doable than "I want to stop being a judgmental asshole."

What is your reason for wanting to make these changes? What makes this a personal priority?

How will making these changes improve your life?

How are you hoping that these changes will improve life for people that you care about?

How are you hoping this will impact future relationships?

Will anyone in your life be negatively affected by this change? Remember that any change to a system affects the whole system. Even good change can throw others into disequilibrium. If you stop drinking, that means that others can no longer play the role of rescuing and enabling, for example. And those roles may be their way of not having to work through their own shit and they may have a negative reaction to you.

What do you think would be a reasonable timeline/goal to actualize this change?

How much time will you need to set aside each week for work to make this happen? For what specific activities? How will they fit into your schedule?

What help do you need in making this change happen? Who can you rely upon for that help who would understand where you are coming from?

Where can you research best practices from people who have overcome this problem in the past? Can you reach out to them directly?

What are your best practices for moving forward? What are the actionable steps?

Make a list of your needs

Make a list of your values (see the values exercise in part one of this workbook)

What are some actionable steps to live closer to those values?

PROGRESS LOG, WEEK _____: *Rate Your Success* ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

What are three things that you're thankful about?

Who in your life now is holding you back from your goal? Who is helping you achieve it?

Are you finding yourself falling into patterns of feeling shame and judging yourself?

Where are you succeeding?

Where are you struggling?

Who is one person that you can apologize to? Why?

How could you make amends with how you've hurt this person and betrayed their trust?

How can you demonstrate longterm change as you progress?

Review, Repeat, and Challenge Yourself every day.

PROGRESS LOG, WEEK _____ *Rate Your Success* ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

What are three things that you're thankful about?

Who in your life now is holding you back from your goal? Who is helping you achieve it?

Are you finding yourself falling into patterns of feeling shame and judging yourself?

Where are you succeeding?

Where are you struggling?

Who is one person that you can apologize to? Why?

How could you make amends with how you've hurt this person and betrayed their trust?

How can you demonstrate longterm change as you progress?

Review, Repeat, and Challenge Yourself every day.

PROGRESS LOG, WEEK _____: *Rate Your Success* ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

What are three things that you're thankful about?

Who in your life now is holding you back from your goal? Who is helping you achieve it?

Are you finding yourself falling into patterns of feeling shame and judging yourself?

Where are you succeeding?

Where are you struggling?

Who is one person that you can apologize to? Why?

How could you make amends with how you've hurt this person and betrayed their trust?

How can you demonstrate longterm change as you progress?

Review, Repeat, and Challenge Yourself every day.

PROGRESS LOG, WEEK _____ *Rate Your Success* ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

What are three things that you're thankful about?

Who in your life now is holding you back from your goal? Who is helping you achieve it?

Are you finding yourself falling into patterns of feeling shame and judging yourself?

Where are you succeeding?

Where are you struggling?

Who is one person that you can apologize to? Why?

How could you make amends with how you've hurt this person and betrayed their trust?

How can you demonstrate longterm change as you progress?

Review, Repeat, and Challenge Yourself every day.

Handling No

Nobody likes to be told "no." Being told no sucks. It makes our inner toddler kick and scream, and all those toxic societal messages start to leak out in response. But the word "no" (or other words and actions that convey it) is one of the most important ways people express boundaries. What if we started paying attention to "no" messages in a conscious way, and dealt with being told no like bad-ass adults? These are some of the strategies that help:

1) **Pay attention to your feelings with self-compassion.** If we stuff our feelings, they are just gonna explode out later, like an overstuffed garbage bag. It's ok to think "ow, that hurt...I was really wanting that to happen"

2) **Put "no" in its proper place.** No is generally the rejection of your offer, not your personhood. Quite rarely is someone saying that everything about you is wrong and unwanted and fundamentally broken. Our inner demons may tell us that when someone doesn't want to hang out with us, but it's bullshit. There are tons of good humans in the world that I don't want to work with, go to parties with, or see naked. I know you feel the same way...and it's important to remember that others can feel that way about you without it being symbolic of something greater.

3) **Recognize the boundary you hit and learn from it**. If someone tells you no, they are setting a boundary. This is good information about them and your relationship with them. This is the whole point of this book, isn't it? To recognize and communicate and respect boundaries? "No" is the space where we start seeing where the boundaries are erected.

4) **Communicate this understanding.** Don't wheedle or try to convince. Don't pout around slathered in butthurt. Say "*I'm bummed, but I get it, no hard feelings.*"

In the space below, think of examples of times you didn't handle a "no" (verbal or nonverbal) as well as you could have and then plan for how you would handle it differently knowing what you know now.

A SITUATION WHERE I REGRET HOW I HANDLED SOMEONE ELSE TELLING ME "NO"	MY ACTION PLAN FOR HANDLING IT DIFFERENTLY NEXT TIME

Apology Template

Have you ever been really, really really fucking sorry about something and when you tried to express it you biffed the apology hardcore? Maybe you were feeling misunderstood and defensive. Or so awkward you fundamentally forgot to use words. I mean, I've done both.

Apologizing well takes practice. The good news is, humans fuck up enough to get *lots* of practice. Here's a formula to practice for next time (or to get the relief of a good apology out of your system when it isn't appropriate to give it directly to the person):

1. Reflect back what the person told or showed you about your actions and the emotions they experienced, to make sure you get it.

2. Take a moment to remind yourself that what they are telling you is not an attack, it's a sign of trust in you and your relationship with them.

3. Acknowledge the harmful impact your words or actions caused them.

4. Thank them for being brave and vulnerable enough to share their experience with you, giving you the opportunity to reflect, take responsibility, and change.

5. Apologize directly and succinctly with direct ownership. (e.g., "I am sorry I did/said….." not "I'm sorry you felt/perceived/experienced my actions as…")

6. Ask them if there is anything else they need to hear or see from you now or in the future.

7. Thank them for giving you the opportunity to apologize.

8. Accept their response to your apology without argument.

9. Make positive changes in your future interactions so you can make new and different mistakes next time.

Incident for which you'd like to apologize:

Reflect back:

Take a moment:

Acknowledge:

Thank:

Apologize:

Ask:

Thank again:

Accept:

Make positive changes:

Incident for which you'd like to apologize:

Reflect back:

Take a moment:

Acknowledge:

Thank:

Apologize:

Ask:

Thank again:

Accept:

Make positive changes:

Incident for which you'd like to apologize:

Reflect back:

Take a moment:

Acknowledge:

Thank:

Apologize:

Ask:

Thank again:

Accept:

Make positive changes:

Incident for which you'd like to apologize:

Reflect back:

Take a moment:

Acknowledge:

Thank:

Apologize:

Ask:

Thank again:

Accept:

Make positive changes:

Incident for which you'd like to apologize:

Reflect back:

Take a moment:

Acknowledge:

Thank:

Apologize:

Ask:

Thank again:

Accept:

Make positive changes:

Incident for which you'd like to apologize:

Reflect back:

Take a moment:

Acknowledge:

Thank:

Apologize:

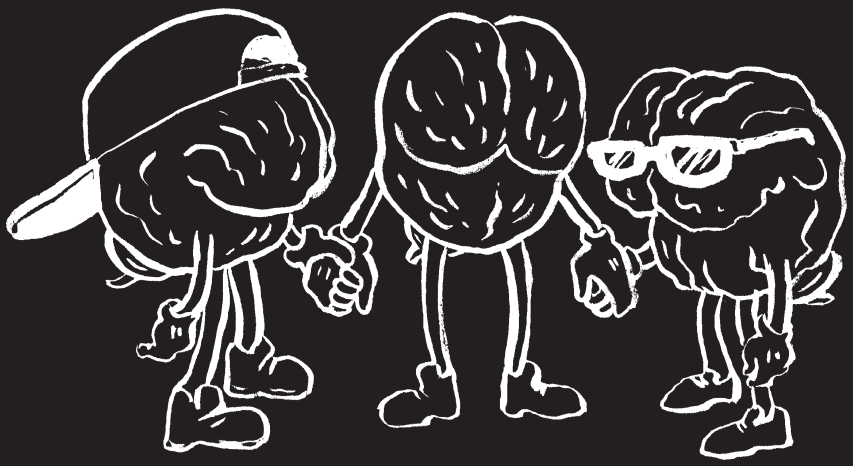
Ask:

Thank again:

Accept:

Make positive changes:

EXERCISES FOR GROUPS



So you are planning some group work around boundaries. Good for you, world changer! Whether you are teaching a workshop on boundaries and consent (something I love doing) or you are working to build a better culture within a group that already exists and is out there doing cool work together, this section should be really helpful. It contains different interactive group exercises you can use or adapt (and if you do something cool with them, I'd love to hear about it!).

There are also some sample guidelines for group rules and norms that are centered in autonomy and consent, plus some tips on how to communicate them effectively and how to follow up when there are violations and misunderstandings. Starting from scratch with these kind of guidelines and procedures can be tough, so this gives you and your groups something to riff off of.

Y'all this is tough stuff, this community accountability stuff. It's so easy to go off the rails very quickly where one person or one group is identified as the abuser at which point they are ostracised or othered. This helps everyone who is not that person or a member of that group feel better, but it creates no cultural change.

True community conversation is designed to create systemic change. To educate ourselves on subjects where our formal education had been lacking. Boundaries and consent education is an area that has not been part of our regular discourse in homes and schools throughout the modern age, right? We have all made errors in this regard because of our previous training and experiences. So true change starts with the belief that when we know better we do better. We stop, listen, talk, and learn. And grow from that place.

And you may be sitting in your own living room thinking *"LOLWUT? There are groups that actually do shit like this?"* I mean, yeah. I've been part of them and have facilitated many more. Boundaries and consent can (and should) be part of all group discussions, be it a therapy group, book group, or radical co-op board meeting.

If you don't already belong to a group and you are really into the idea of hosting a platica around boundaries and consent, organizing and hosting one will be less hard than you think. A local community center or a church (I *know*...but I have friends that are radical AF pastors, out there fighting racism, protecting trans kids, and plotting to overthrow the government...POC, queer-run churches are totaly my scene) might be super inerested. Or start a Meet-Up, post an event on social media then find a space at a coffee shop with a back room, a medication center, or a yoga studio after hours and do the thing yourself.

Group Rules for Community Conversations

So you want to organize a boundaries or consent workshop, a platica (a Spanish word you see a lot in my part of the country to define community discussion looking to facilitate change and understanding) or another community conversation. Bad ass!

This kind of conversation can have a lot of benefits. It can also have a lot of pitfalls. I've seen such talks go off the rails, and you probably have too. Being proactive from the beginning with a structure to help you accomplish your goals can really help. but rules can help. If you are organizing a platica, start with solid ground rules laying out these expectations so the real vulnerability of this work can shine through and change can unfold.

Example Rules:

- Communicate using I statements (e.g., "I feel…." rather than "You made me…."
- Speak from personal experience, rather than speaking for the experience of others, unless expressly and specifically asked to do so ("my friend could not be here tonight but asked me to read this out loud to the group about their experience")
- Speaking will be limited to XX minutes to allow everyone a chance to participate. Individuals who would like to speak can sign up on the board up front (or we will speak in turn in a circle, etc.)

- Individuals who do not wish to speak can either verbally comment "pass" or shake their head no when it is their turn or they are questioned. Alternatively, seating can be arranged in such a way that individuals who do not wish to speak can sit in a different area.
- There is not any required participation in experiential exercises.
- Any exercises that are done on paper (journaling, completing worksheets...like any of the worksheets earlier on in this workbook, for example) are not required to be shared out loud.

Talking Circles

Talking circles are an excellent way of sharing experience. It is not focused on teaching specific skills or setting up structure around a program facility. But it can be a good start in that direction because it creates a space to speak to experience without rebuttal or comment, as well as deepen our own understanding of experience. Talking circles are an indigenous group communication strategy… and there is tons out on the internet about how to do one. I've used the general outline that my colleague Michael Garrett outlined from his experience as a member of the Cherokee Nation (Eastern Band).

Side note, I started using this technique as well as other indigenous techniques during my years working in community mental health, and everyone who attended my groups, not just my indigenous clients who followed me from job to job. I knew real change was happening when a colleague told me that on my day off, when he was subbing my group, the group members took over and ran their own talking circle and told *him* to watch and learn.

Talking circles have spread to other cultures precisely because it is such an efficacious way to structure a group dialogue through power sharing (if you read the accompanying *Unfuck Your Boundaries* book, you already saw why this social model is super important to setting and respecting boundaries).

Using it isn't an untoward practice, like wearing a headdress to a concert because you think the feathers are pretty (which I don't need to explain is a huge no-no, right?). I also think it's appropriate to acknowledge the roots of this practice. Anything that survived colonialist erasure and is now helping create social healing deserves a conscious thank you, yeah?

1) Choose a topic for discussion. If you are using talking circle to establish new discussions about consent in community space, that works as a topic. You could also speak to previous messages about consent, experiences about boundary violations, etc.

2) An object is used and passed to denote who is speaking. Speaking is only done by the person holding the object. You can use a stone, a stick, a feather. Whatever makes sense for your group. I've also seen individuals set something in the middle of the group as a point of focus, such as a candle or flowers.

3) The person speaking speaks only to their experience. No one comments on what they say either after they speak or when it is their turn, either positively or negatively. This includes crosstalk (you know, when people are talking over each other, or having side convos when someone is speaking to the larger group). This is not a feedback process, but a deep listening process.

4) Anyone can pass when it is their turn.

5) If time permits, complete more than one round with the group. I always liked to do three rounds, knowing that individuals will speak more deeply each time. Something someone else says may trigger more reflection, or they may just feel safer when they see the rule about commentary and cross talk is held firm.

Personal Space Exercise

This is a great activity for teaching boundaries and consent without having to involve any touch between participants.

Ask for two volunteers, letting them know that they will not have to touch each other, even to shake hands.

Have them stand on opposite sides of the room.

Ask them to move toward each other one step at a time, stopping at their point of comfort of personal space.

Mark the spaces on the floor where they are both standing with a piece of painter's tape, a post-it, etc.

Ask them if this was their first point of discomfort from closeness or did it occur earlier.

Ask them to move to the spot that was their initial stopping point and mark those spaces as well.

Discuss the thoughts and feelings and bodily sensations they had and why they pushed themselves further than they needed to. Why did they not stop at the first spot? What finally precipitated them stopping?

STFU

I wrote more about STFU in the *Unfuck Your Boundaries* book, but essentially it's a concept Sarah Mirk wrote about in Sex From Scratch, which she learned from a tech entrepreneur named Matthew. This is something you can practice for yourself any time you're in a group setting.

If you want to do this in a group, pass out the STFU model to group members then either go about normal group interactions or choose a topic for mindful practice. Ask everyone in the group to use the model for 15-20 minutes. Then discuss what everyone noticed in the process of using the model. What was uncomfortable? What did they notice about themselves? Others? Were they less successful at following the guidelines than they hoped? What opportunities for growth did they notice in themselves for the process?

S.T.F.U stands for:

Share Time: Divide the amount of time you have for the interaction (say an hour) by the number of the people in the room (say six) and make sure you don't spend more than your portion of the time talking (in this case, ten minutes).

Three Seconds: Give others a chance to continue to speak or jump into the conversation before you begin to speak. That means counting to three when there is a pause in the conversation before making your own verbal contribution.

Find Empathy: Really listen to people…not just the content but their backstory. Where are they coming from?

Understanding Is Not Necessary: I really love this one. Active listening is designed to help us better understand others, right? But that doesn't mean we always are successful at doing so. We've all had a what-the-literal-fuck moment in regard to someone else's worldview. It's okay to simply accept it as theirs without "getting" it. And maybe further marination on what they are saying will give you an aha moment later?

The Consent Commandments

Consent provides a safe framework for group interactions. For those of us with trauma histories, a safe framework can be a very healing experience. And, equally important, it allows us to experience own our desires in a sex-positive way. In an ideal situation, you aren't having to be convinced, you're saying *yes*!

These ten commandments came from a class I was teaching a few years ago for clinicians working with teens. We walked through group activities like the ones in this section of the book. . Feel free to make a copy of these to use in your groups, as a set of rules or as a starting point for discussion.

1. Consent for sex (and any other behaviors you are asking someone to engage in) cannot be given by people who are drunk. Or under the influence of drugs. Or hardcore medications. People under the influence are already doing seriously dumb stuff, like craving those two for a dollar tacos from Jack in the Box. So don't add something to their regret list that has large, long-term consequences.

2. Going through a lot of emotional stuff can be just as bad for your decision-making process as being drunk. If someone is stressed out or dealing with a lot, they may be seeking comfort and connection, and we often equate that with sex. If you think someone isn't making a good decision, put sex

on hold and be there for them in other ways—like ones that won't embarrass them a week from now.

3. Consent isn't static. Agreeing to something on one occasion does not mean agreeing to it forever. So I let you borrow my car last week. Maybe you brought it back with the gas tank empty and full of used Starbucks cups and candy wrappers and I don't want you using it again. Maybe you took fantastic care of it, but I still don't want you using it again. Either way, it's still my car, not yours. You don't just march in my house, grab the keys off the counter, and take off in my car because I let you do it last week. No consent equals Grand Theft Auto, right?

4. Consent for one thing isn't consent for another. Someone gets naked in front of you? This is an excellent sign, yes. Is it consent for any specific sexual activity? No. Agreeing to one kind of activity isn't agreeing to all of them. Making out doesn't mean oral sex is cool. And yes to oral sex doesn't mean yes to penetrative sex. Our interactions are a salad bar, not a casserole. Wanting croutons doesn't mean you also have to have bell peppers, yanno?

5. Silence isn't consent. Someone may not actively say "no," but being passive isn't a "yes." Many times individuals don't speak up because they are freaked out or don't know how to. They could be quietly unhappy or quietly enjoying themselves. You don't know if you don't ask.

6. Consent needs to be informed. Are you sleeping with other people? That's ok, it's called dating not getting married for a reason. Have a sexually transmitted infection? That happens, too. Moving out of state in a week? That can impact future plans a bit. Potential partners need to know all of the above and any other information that may inform their decision about sexual activity. Be grown-up enough to have the awkward conversations.

7. Consent is a community obligation, not just a personal one. We need to help support each other with gray areas of consent. Speak up if you see someone in an uncomfortable situation and back up their right to say no. Friends don't let friends listen to Nickelback, and they don't let them get into situations where they are not really giving consent or not really getting consent. If you see someone at a party getting into a danger zone, then be the protective wingperson. And if the DJ plays Nickelback, it's time to leave altogether.

8. Having to convince someone is not consent. You aren't trying to win a court case by wooing a jury member. You're awesome, right? If they aren't into you enough to realize that and you have to convince them, then they don't deserve your awesomeness. If you get a "Wellllllllll, I don't knowwwwww," respond with, "That's cool, let me know if you change your mind" and then step away from the sex.

9. Consent doesn't just mean the right to say no, it also means the right to say *yes*. Shaming people because they choose to

engage in sexual activity makes active, enthusiastic consent way more complicated. Affirmative consent is difficult for many people (usually women) because they think that an enthusiastic yes means they are slutty, and that they are supposed to pretend they *don't* want sex and must be "convinced." This sends mixed messages to their partners. When are we supposed to "convince" and when are we supposed to just stop? If everyone is sexually empowered, no one ever has to be "convinced."

10. Consent is more than just sex, it's about boundaries in general. You should get people's permission to touch them for any reason (e.g., "You look like you could use a hug right now, would you like one?"). Consent extends past physical boundaries, as well. You should never force your will on others. Don't share others' information, experiences, images, or things without their permission. Don't make plans on their behalf without their permission. Don't force them to share information with you or anyone else if they are uncomfortable doing so. No matter what you think is in their best interest, unless you are their legal guardian, let them make their own decisions. You do you and let them be them.

Sample Consent Policy for Groups

This sample consent policy is based on the one available through the National Coalition of Sexual Freedom. Modern consent culture originated within BDSM collectives (specifically, the first written consent policy came from a gay men's leather club in New York City). Taking on the responsibility for creating a group culture that values consent goes far beyond sexual play spaces, however. So this sample policy is generalized with that in mind. You can use this model within a group to co-create a group policy, or if you are tasked by an organization you take part in with drafting a consent policy, you can totally use this as a starting point. Feel free to add more and make it specific to your group or scene.

It's also important to provide education about your consent rules and have delegates/representatives marked or pointed out who are available to assist if there's a question or incident (like a group proctor type person).

And it also needs to be said by me and on your consent policy that this doesn't constitute legal advice, and is information provided for educational purposes in support of best practices in group spaces.

1. No touching of people or their personal property without their express permission.
2. Additionally, negotiate the scope of your interaction with others before beginning the interaction.
3. Make sure that everyone you are interacting with demonstrates the mental and emotional capacity to consent to the interaction you are intending to engage in.
4. Treat everyone with equal respect.

5. Ensure that verbal interactions are also consensual (use people's appropriate pronouns, names, role-play identities, etc.)

6. Agree that going "further" than discussed will not be discussed within the heat of the moment, as it becomes harder to recognize and verbalize boundaries.

7. Anyone can withdraw consent at any time. Plan on a safeword or sign ahead of time that everyone understands and recommends as a hard NO.

8. If you witness a violation of the consent policy, find and inform a group proctor so they can help manage the incident.

9. Violations of the consent policy can result in individuals being asked to leave, not being welcomed back, and/or legal charges being filed.

10. Disclaimer: Every reasonable effort will be made to enforce this policy, but this organization makes no representations or guarantees about its ability to do so, and all participants/attendees retain full, sole responsibility for their safety and the safety of others with whom they interact.

Dealing With Incidents

No matter how proactive we are in creating affirming and respectful spaces, people make mistakes. Sometimes with the intent to harm and sometimes because we just fuck up. So what do you do when someone violates the group's consent policy, or another person's boundaries?

Something that historically ends quite badly? Group accountability sessions. Or as I call them, being from the South, "come to Jesus meetings." There has been a movement in recent years for groups to come together to hold non-conforming group members accountable for past behavior. This isn't a bad idea in theory. The idea is that groups hold a cultural norm that all members are committed to upholding. And when it doesn't happen, everyone comes together to discuss the transgression and determine if repairs can be made.

In reality? The problem with come to Jesus meetings, is they generally end up being a shit-show of finger pointing and blaming.

Why does this happen? None of us are so evolved that we can't fall into angry-mob group think. Or even just single-person rage justification against another person. Brain science reason? It's called a *fundamental attribution error*. When we mess up, we attribute to the situation at hand (whether it be a reasonable justification or not). When other people mess up, we attribute it to them being a fundamentally terrible person. This is the brain's default way of thinking and until we develop awareness of it and learn how to think through it, we end up being pretty awful to other people.

And brain processes aside, accountability really only works when it's a deeply personal process. An internal dialogue of "what the fucks" that we all need to undertake to be better people.

This isn't to say that groups shouldn't hold boundaries and behavioral standards. But holding a boundary consists of a designated group member saying "My friend...your behaviors are not acceptable in this environment. I hope you feel that working through what led you to these behaviors is something that makes sense for you. And if you want to continue to be involved here, we'd love to discuss your process and whether or not that can happen. Until then, we need you to no longer be part of group events and operations."

These conversations include the unacceptable behaviors and are expressed in a judgement-free and attribution-free manner. As in:

> "This is a sober meeting space. In the past three weeks, you have come in on two different occasions stumbling and other group members smelled alcohol on you. When Marisol asked you to leave for the evening stating that you appeared to be altered, she reports that you yelled at her and called her a 'controlling bitch.'"

Notice how there was not even any discussion about whether or not they were drunk? Or that they were angry at and verbally combative with Marisol? That's what I mean by judgement-free. Very behaviorally specific. You were stumbling and smelled of alcohol. It is fact-focused. You yelled and used these words while doing so. The attribution-free part is also implied within the dialogue. Nobody says you're an abusive asshole or a shitty person or that you are drinking because you have no self-control. The reasoning is not the group's concern. The reasoning is part of the self-accountability process.

Accountability sessions after the fact are tough to do well (but possible!). But oftentimes can be avoided when we are prepared to handle issues as they arise. The number of people I know that are good at this is so low, I could easily count them all on one hand. Communication is hard for people even when there is no elevated emotions and conflict involved. So what are we supposed to do when shit gets hella hostile?

Sample Incident Policy

Have a plan for dealing with incidents in group settings BEFORE incidents occur (we call them standard operating procedures in work settings, same thing). This format is also based on the work put out by the National Coalition on Sexual Freedom (NCSF) with adaptations by me. Just like with the sample consent policy above, you can use this in a group setting to co-create an incident policy. Or if you drew the short straw for creating one for a group you belong to, feel free to use this sample policy as a starting point.

Some "standard operating procedure" considerations may include:

1) Check for emergent care need. Call 911 if it's an emergency. Does the person whose boundaries were crossed need immediate medical attention (including mental health crisis treatment)? Arrange for transport to an ER or crisis mental health center or call an ambulance. Do they want to file a police report? Call the non emergency number and request an officer be dispatched to take a report. Ask for a mental health trained officer if one is available in your community and on that shift. Ensure that care happens *first*.

2) If there is no current need, have two proctors/staff members talk to everyone involved (including witnesses). Do *not* bring everyone together for a group discussion.

3) Keep a record of names and contact information of everyone spoken to.

4) Ask everyone involved "what happened" and "what would you like to have happen now."

5) Listen for consistencies and inconsistencies/discrepancies within the statements that people give you in their separate conversations/ interviews.

6) Look at patterns of behavior with certain people. Do similar incidents happen regularly?

7) Look at intent. Was it accidental? Did the person accused apologize sincerely or was it defensive and excuse-laden?

8) Have one or more people empowered with decision making ability to issue consequences or sanctions regarding their ability to remain in the group space (warnings, being asked to leave, etc.). If information emerges that does require police involvement at any point, you can still bring that in.

9) Don't name accusers (although sometimes it will be obvious). You also don't need to be specific regarding sanctions. It's ok to say "We have reason to believe your actions violated our consent policy and we don't feel you are a good fit for this space."

IDENTIFYING ABUSE

Now at the end of this workbook, we are coming to some of the most difficult work...identifying abuse carried out through coercive control. *Coercive control* refers to regular patterns of boundary violating behaviors that create fear-based compliance in someone. The term was coined by Evan Stark, whose 2007 book has the same name. His work brought to light how another person's systemic, organized boundary violations create an ongoing pattern of behavior that takes away our freedom of choice and ability to define our own personhood.

Coercive control behaviors are not just a more extreme version of high conflict personality behaviors (which I talk about extensively in *Unf*ck Your Boundaries*). High conflict responses are often the result of people perceiving their lives as out of control and they perceive conflict as their best means of regaining control. It *is* a boundary-busting behavior, and those of us who are more empathic can end up feeling attacked and manipulated by high conflict, but that's not the end goal of the person engaging in conflict.

Coercive control, by contrast, is strategic, rational, and ongoing… not reactive in the heat of the moment. Individuals who engage in coercive control are seeking the measurable material and social benefits they can achieve by shattering the psyche of another person in order to own them.

And because mind-games, degradation, isolation, intimidation, regulation, and an ever changing "rule book" are not illegal actions, they are even more effective at holding another human being hostage than inflicting physical pain. It's not the physical abuse, it's the mind-fuck. It's emotional terrorism. And it's the real reason it's so hard to leave an abusive partner. And the reason that so many abuse survivors suffer from PTSD.

Coercive Control Checklist

The items on this list are based on the items used by researchers to measure coercive control in romantic partnerships.

When listed on paper, these activities seem pretty obvious, but when you are living this experience they sneak up in such a manner that we don't always see it until we step back.

Take a look at this list and check any boxes that fit the behavior of a specific person in your life if you're concerned that their behavior might be coercively controlling. If you need to add a new column of boxes for a different person, you can. There's no set number of boxes that add up to "yes this is abuse" but hopefully these lists will help you start to see the patterns.

If you find yourself checking a lot of the boxes in any of the next three lists, please consult the list of resources at the end of this workbook—there is help.

- ◌ Controls/limits your contact with others (friends, family members, etc.) for instance by phone, internet, or chat.
- ◌ Wants all your passwords and access to all your accounts (but you don't have access to theirs)
- ◌ Tracks your movements through your cell phone (for your "safety")
- ◌ Makes demands regarding your movements (where you go, when you go, who you go with)
- ◌ Has physically stopped you from going somewhere or leaving the house (doesn't have to be by laying hands on you—they could block your exit, hide your keys, etc.)
- ◌ Spies on you/stalks you to check in on your movements
- ◌ Checks your clothes/receipts/items in the home for signs of your activities
- ◌ Audio or video tapes you either without your consent or by threatening you into consenting.

- [ ] Asks others about your activities (your children, family members, friends, neighbors)
- [ ] Makes demands about your appearance (that you look or dress a certain way for them, or maintain a certain weight)
- [ ] Controls household resources (bank accounts, vehicles, use of jointly produced income)
- [ ] Controls access to medical care
- [ ] Demands sexual intimacy in general, or specific sexual acts (either with them or with others on their demand)
- [ ] Controls use of contraceptives or STI prevention methods
- [ ] Interferes with or threatens your immigration/citizenship status
- [ ] Creates other legal trouble for you
- [ ] Threatens your housing stability (e.g., threatening to kick you out of a home they pay for, breaking rules set in a home rental to have your lease terminated and get you both evicted)
- [ ] Controls all parenting decisions and parenting tasks
- [ ] Threatens harm
- [ ] Displays physical violence towards others or property to frighten you (punching walls, hurting a family pet)
- [ ] Otherwise scares you into submission
- [ ] Threatens self-harm in retaliation for your behaviors
- [ ] Engages in self-harm in retaliation for your behaviors
- [ ] Keeps you from work/makes you late to work/disrupts your work day/gets you fired
- [ ] Destroys your property
- [ ] Destroys the property of your friends and family
- [ ] Keeps weapons and makes threats (overt or veiled) to use them against you or someone else

Red Flags Checklist

Along with the above, more overt behaviors, there are a lot of practices I see that also serve to wield power over another human being. These could be early warning sign behaviors in a new relationship that may become more intense as time goes on, or they could be occurring in longer term relationships indicating a problem with systemic boundary violations. These behaviors are more belittling than controlling, but when done in a systematic way can invoke the process of wearing down resistance we see in coercively controlling relationships.

- ◌ Rude or dismissive of your friends and family
- ◌ Does not want you doing things with friends or family without their presence
- ◌ Excuses all their behavior rather than accepting accountability
- ◌ Needs constant contact with you through the day
- ◌ Engages in behaviors outside your value system and expects you to excuse them as "no big deal" or "jokes" (such as racial comments)
- ◌ "Jokes" about your appearance, passions, intelligence, culture, gender, or identity
- ◌ Challenges your worldview, motives, etc consistently (rather than asking to better understand them)
- ◌ Otherwise does not support your values and passions
- ◌ Picks fights so you feel obligated to make things up to them

- Always expects you to wait for their attention, doesn't value your time
- Never admits any fault in past relationships ending
- Expects you to be okay with their behavior when its not okay for you to engage in same-said behavior
- Is rude to people they see as beneath them (service workers, waitstaff)
- Minimizes your feelings and dismisses how their choices and behaviors affect you in negative ways (such as accusing you of being too sensitive)
- Frames your disagreement as you not understanding or listening to them effectively
- Questions your judgement ("Oh, you're wearing that?")
- Challenges or belittles your decisions, even decisions with little consequence
- Threatens you with social embarrassment
- Disrupts the well-being of other people in your life in order to disrupt your well-being (your children, family members, loved ones)
- Makes you responsible for their happiness, stability, contentment
- Is jealous of attention you pay to others

Checklist of Coercive Control Strategies Wielded Towards Lesbian, Gay, Plurisexual, Trans, and Nonbinary Individuals

This list of power and control tactics is created by FORGE Forward, a website with a ton of great resources for trans people. I have found that many items on the list apply to relationships in which at least one person is not heterosexual, even if they are cisgender. Their list, with my additions based on my clinical experiences and the experiences of my friends, is below:

- ◌ Disregarding, diminishing, disrespecting your identity (names, pronouns, etc).
- ◌ Making fun or belittling these same identity markers
- ◌ Ridiculing your appearance
- ◌ Denying your identity (that you are not a real man, woman, enby, etc.)
- ◌ Using pejorative terms to describe you identity or aspects of your identity (including terms for body parts)
- ◌ Telling you no one will love you
- ◌ Telling you you are an embarrassment to communities to which you belong (LGBT community, church community, your bowling league, etc.)
- ◌ Refusing to let you discuss issues specific to your identity

- ◌ Threatening to out you to individuals you are not yet out to
- ◌ Weaponizing others' negative feelings about you to hurt you (e.g., having a fundamentalist preacher try to "save" you)
- ◌ Weaponizing the healthcare system or judicial system against you (threatening mental health commitments, police action, etc.)
- ◌ Restricting or denying access to medical affirmative care (therapy, hormones, surgery)
- ◌ Restricting or denying access to personal affirmative items (clothing, prosthetics, etc.)
- ◌ Fetishizing your body

Resources

Resources for Victims and Survivors of Interpersonal Violence

The National Domestic Violence Hotline – 1-800-799-7233 (SAFE) – www.ndvh.org

Speak to (or message) an advocate to seek immediate help, gain resources for survivors, or to discuss your options for leaving, should you choose to do so.

National Dating Abuse Helpline – 1-866-331-9474 – www.loveisrespect.org

Find ways to prevent or end an abusive relationship. This hotline is tailored to young people but offers resources for concerned friends and family, as well.

National Sexual Assault Hotline – 1-800-656-4673 (HOPE) – www.rainn.org

Provides strategies for prevention and safety as well as healing and recovery.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1-800-273-8255 (TALK) – www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Offers support to those in distress or crisis, and provides prevention resources for loved ones.

National Center for Victims of Crime – 1-855-484-2846 (VICTIM) – www.victimsofcrime.org

Comprehensive advocacy program that helps victims of crimes rebuild their lives.

National Human Trafficking Resource Center/Polaris Project – Call: 1-888-373-7888 – Text: HELP to BeFree (233733) – www.polarisproject.org

Call (or text) for crisis assistance, survivor support, or to report possible trafficking. This hotline can also connect you with local anti-trafficking services in your area.

National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights – 1-510-465-1984 – www.nnirr.org

An organization whose mission is to defend and expand rights for immigrants and refugees. Call for resources, and get connected to local allies.

National Coalition for the Homeless – 1-202-737-6444 – www.nationalhomeless.org

Network of advocacy groups working to prevent and end homelessness. Call to get emergency assistance from your local service providers.

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence – 1-800-537-2238 – www.nrcdv.org and www.vawnet.org

Call to request individualized and comprehensive technical assistance and resources on intervention and prevention strategies.

National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health – 1-312-726-7020 ext. 2011 – www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org

Offers assistance, resources, and training to advocates and service providers working with survivors.

Resources Specific to Children

Childhelp USA/National Child Abuse Hotline – 1-800-422-4453 – www.childhelpusa.org

Call to get help in reporting child abuse or to speak to a Childhelp counselor.

Children's Defense Fund – 202-628-8787 – www.childrensdefense.org

A non-profit child advocacy program that lobbies for the rights of all children in America, particularly poor children, children of color and those with disabilities.

Child Welfare League of America – 202-688-4200 **–** www.cwla.org

Coalition of private and public agencies dedicated to serving vulnerable children and families

National Council on Juvenile and Family Court Judges – 775-507-4777 – www.ncjfcj.org

Child Protection and custody/resource center on domestic violence, which can benefit individuals who have been victims of coercive control.

Center for Judicial Excellence – 415-444-6556 – www.centerforjudicialexcellence.org

Nonprofit organization focused on creating judicial accountability in the family court system. Their focus on policy change is a fantastic resource for individuals who have found that their experiences of coercive control were not considered crimes by the court system.

Resources Specific to Teens

Love Is Respect – Hotline: 1-866-331-9474 or Text: loveis to 22522 – www.loveisrespect.org

In association with the National Domestic Violence Hotline, this organization works to empower young people to prevent and end abusive relationships.

Break the Cycle – 202-849-6289 – www.breakthecycle.org

Organization centered around helping young people ages 12-24 build healthy and safe relationships.

Resource Specific to Deaf Women

Deaf Abused Women's Network (DAWN) – hotline@deafdawn.org – VP: 202-559-5366 – www.deafdawn.org

Agency that provides crisis intervention and survivor services for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind communities.

Resources Specific to Women of Color

Women of Color Network – 844-962-6462 – www.wocninc.org

A group established to address challenges facing Women of Color within the violence against women movement.

INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence – incite.natl@gmail.com – www.incite-national.org

Feminists of Color united to end state and domestic violence.

Resources to Specific to Latinx Individuals

Casa de Esperanza – Linea de crisis 24-horas/24-hour crisis line – 1-651-772-1611 – www.casadeesperanza.org

A bilingual domestic violence hotline. Their mission is to mobilize Latin@ communities to end domestic violence.

National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities – 1-651-646-5553 – www.nationallatinonetwork.org

Focuses on ending and preventing domestic violence in Latin@ communities, provides everything from shelter services to community engagement projects.

Resource Specific to Indigenous Women

National Indigenous Women's Resource Center – 855-649-7299 – www.niwrc.org

Organization dedicated to ending violence amongst native and indigenous populations through education and policy development.

Resources Specific to Asian and Pacific Islander Individuals

Asian and Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence – 415-568-3315 – www.apiidv.org

Resource center for Asian and Pacific Islander communities facing issues of domestic violence.

Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence (CAAAV) – 1-212-473-6485 – www.caaav.org

Committee centered around organizing Asian communities to fight for institutional change.

Manavi – 1-732-435-1414 – www.manavi.org

Meeting needs (both immediate and long-term) for South Asian Women affected by violence.

Resource Specific to African-American Individuals

National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community – 1-844-778-5462 – ujimacommunity.org

Provides resources to and advocates for the Black Community in response to domestic, sexual, and community violence.

Resources Specific to Lesbian, Gay, Plurisexual, Trans, and NonBinary Individuals

The Audre Lorde Project – 1-718-596-0342 – www.alp.org

Organization working towards community wellness and social/economic justice for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Two-Spirit, Trans and Gender Non Conforming People of Color.

LGBT National Help Center – 1-206-350-4283 – www.glnh.org

Provides peer support and local resources to the LGBT community.

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force – 1-202-393-5177 – www.ngltf.org

Organization focused on advancing justice and equality for LGBTQ people.

Northwest Network of Bisexual, Trans, Lesbian & Gay Survivors of Abuse – 1-206-568-7777 – www.nwnetwork.org

Network offering direct resources for victims of abuse, as well as resources for advocacy organizations.

Trans Lifeline – 877-565-8860 – www.translifeline.org

A hotline dedicated to improving the quality of trans lives and ending the epidemic of trans suicide by offering justice-oriented community aid.

Trevor Project – 1-866-488-7386 – thetrevorproject.org

Focused on preventing suicide and crisis intervention for LGBTQ and questioning individuals. The hotline is dedicated to helping those in need of immediate help.

It Gets Better – info@itgetsbetter.org – itgetsbetter.org

Aiming to uplift, empower and connect LGBTQ youth around the world.

Resource Specific to Older Adults

National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life – 1-608-255-0539 – www.ncall.us

Provides technical assistance, training, and resources in order to advocate for elderly victims of abuse.

Resource Specific to Men

1in6 – 1in6.org

Provides men affected by sexual abuse or assault with survivor's resources.

Legal Resources

Battered Women's Justice Project – 1-800-903-0111 – www.bwjp.org

National resource center on civil and criminal justice responses to intimate partner violence.

Legal Momentum – 1-212-925-6635 – www.legalmomentum.org

Provides expert legal council in order to ensure economic and personal security for women and girls.

WomensLaw.org – www.womenslaw.org

Provides relevant legal information for all genders in regards to domestic and sexual violence.

National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women – 1-800-903-0111 x 3 – www.ncdbw.org

Provides customized technical assistance to victims of battery who are facing criminal charges or serving prison sentences.

Legal Network for Gender Equity – (202) 588-5180 – nwlc.org/join-the-legal-network/

Seeks gender justice in a variety of ways; in courtrooms, through public policies and cultural changes.

Resources Specific to Violence Prevention

National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS) – 1-720-466-3882 – www.nomas.org

A Call to Men – 1-917-922-6738 – www.acalltomen.org

Men Can Stop Rape – 1-202-265-6530 – www.mencanstoprape.org

Men Stopping Violence – 1-866-717-9317 – www.menstoppingviolence.org

Media Resources (Books, Websites, Etc.)

Learning Good Consent: Building Ethical Relationships In A Complicated World – Cindy Crabb

Empowered Boundaries: Setting Boundaries and Inspiring Social Change – Cristien Storm

Invisible Chains: Overcoming Coercive Control In Your Intimate Relationship – Lisa Aronson Fontes

Conflict Is Not Abuse – Sarah Schulman

Dare To Lead – Brene Brown

The Gift of Fear – Gavin DeBecker

Betty Martin's "Wheel of Consent" and "The Three Minute Game" - *Betty Martin. org*

How to Put Together a Consent Workshop – *https://tinyurl.com/ConsentWorkshopZine*

I Heart Consent Workshop Facilitator Guide – *https://tinyurl.com/IHeartConsentManual*

Organizations that Produce Videos to Facilitate Discussions about Boundaries and Consent

Amaze.org

Blue Street Videos (You Tube) — includes the OG "Tea Consent" video

Planned Parenthood

Common Sense Media

Campus Clarity (YouTube) — "2 Minutes Will Change The Way You Think About Consent"

The Holderness Family — "Baby Just GO Outside"

Katherine Ryan's Take on Hamilton — Netflix Special (and Netflix Facebook clip)

Add Your Own Resources

Are there any resources that are local to you or specific to your needs (eg, a mental health hotline, the non-emergency police number, a therapist text line, the friend who said you can call them at 3am if you need to) that you want to keep a handy reference of? Record them on this page so you always have them when you need them.

Faith G. Harper, PhD, LPC-S, ACS, ACN is a bad-ass, funny lady with a PhD. She's a licensed professional counselor, board supervisor, certified sexologist, and applied clinical nutritionist with a private practice and consulting business in San Antonio, TX. She has been an adjunct professor and a TEDx presenter, and proudly identifies as a woman of color and uppity intersectional feminist. She is the author of the book *Unf*ck Your Brain* and many other popular zines and books on subjects such as anxiety, depression, and grief. She is available as a public speaker and for corporate and clinical trainings.

I have the whole 5 MINUTE THERAPY set, but I have to keep buying them again because my friends need them too!
GRIEF
RELATIONSHIPPING
Love Differently. Because Rules are for Gaens
DATING
It's Not Relationshipping (And That's a Good Thing)
ADULTING
To Be An Adulting Adult
This is Your Brain on DEPRESSION
Finding Your Path to Getting Better
This is Your Brain On ADDICTION
Where They Come From and How We Heal
DEFRIENDING
This is Your Brain on ANGER
What It Is, How To Deal
HOW NOT TO KILL YOURSELF
A Survival Guide for Imaginative Pessimists
SET SYTE
COPING SKILL
Because Sometimes Lif
Is Some Serious Bullsh
Faith G. Harper, PhD, LPC-S, ACS
This is Your Brain on ANXIETY
What Happens and What Helps
FAITH G. HARPER

SUBSCRIBE TO EVERYTHING WE PUBLISH!

Do you love what Microcosm publishes?

Do you want us to publish more great stuff?

Would you like to receive each new title as it's published?

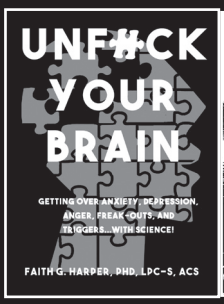
Subscribe as a BFF to our new titles and we'll mail them all to you as they are released!

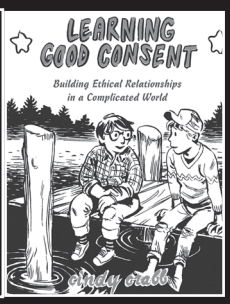
$13-30/mo, pay what you can afford!

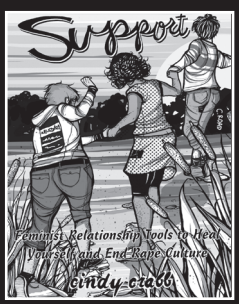
microcosmpublishing.com/bff

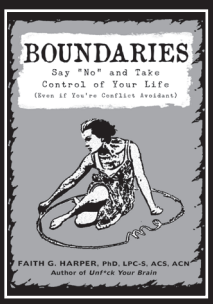
...AND HELP US GROW YOUR SMALL WORLD!

More for Getting Your Brain Right:


UNF#CK YOUR BRAIN
GETTING OVER ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, ANGER, FREAK-OUTS, AND TRIGGERS...WITH SCIENCE!
FAITH G. HARPER, PHD, LPC-S, ACS





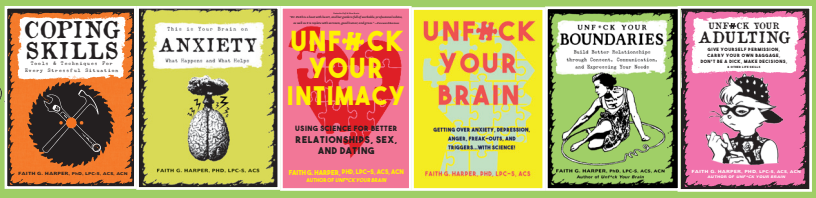

BOUNDARIES
Say "No" and Take Control of Your Life
(Even if You're Conflict Avoidant)
FAITH G. HARPER, PhD, LPC-S, ACS, ACN
Author of Unf*ck Your Brain

oh, FUCK no!
? NO NO NO ?
hmm
I'M SO SORRY...

Are other people constantly intruding on your personal space, using your stuff, disrespecting you, and otherwise violating your boundaries? You can't control what they do, but you can control how you understand and communicate your own needs and make choices about how you behave and respond to the people around you. Dive deep into self-work with this interactive guide that can be used alone or as a companion to Dr. Faith's book *Unfuck Your Boundaries*. You'll learn:

· HOW TO GIVE AND GET CONSENT
· HOW TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE STATING YOUR BOUNDARIES CLEARLY AND BEING UNDERSTOOD
· HOW TO DECIDE WHAT IS A DEALBREAKER
· HOW TO DEAL WITH BOUNDARIES IN GROUP SETTINGS
· HOW TO IDENTIFY ABUSE
· HOW TO HOLD YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE TO RESPECTING THE BOUNDARIES OF OTHERS.

Helpful to anyone trying to figure out healthier intimate relationships, better workplace dynamics, difficult family drama, or just how to be more confident in your own skin.



$9.95 U.S. / $12.99 CAN

9 781621 961762

SKILLS TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE AND THE WORLD
www.Microcosm.Pub
1752 N WILLIAMS AVE • PORTLAND, OR 97227